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TRAVELS

IN

SIBERIA.

BY S. S. HILL, ESQ.

"These unfrequented *wilds*
I better brook than flourishing peopled towns."
Two Gentlemen of Verona.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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TRAVELS IN SIBERIA.

CHAPTER I.

JOURNEY FROM IRKOUTSK TO THE BORDER TOWNS OF SIBERIA AND CHINA.

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About 550 versts south-east of Irkoutsk, are situated the border towns of the Russian and Chinese territories, Kiachta and Maimatchin, which form the gateway of the sole channel of all the intercourse carried on between these two great but dissimilar empires. During the time of my residence at Irkoutsk, I made a journey to these remote and remarkable places; and I had the opportunity of seeing the Chinese town of Maimatchin, and its inhabitants, who are composed exclusively of the original race that inhabit central Asia, and concerning whom so little is really known throughout the rest of the world, under fortunate circumstances.

I made a visit, also, upon the same journey, to the Khomba Lama, or Buddhist high-priest of the Bouriats,

who have been already mentioned among the subjects of the Russian emperor in this part of his dominions. All that I had the opportunity of seeing, and all that I experienced upon this journey, more strongly engaged my interest, than any thing that had fallen under my observation at any former time during these travels; I shall, therefore, describe what I saw and felt with as much minuteness as the occasion may seem to admit. But before commencing the account of the journey, it is necessary to introduce a character by whom I was accompanied, in the capacity of servant and interpreter.

Since I had been in the capital of Eastern Siberia, I had had only a Russian servant; and as he was not acquainted with any language but his own, I did not think his services sufficient for my purpose in accomplishing this journey. I had not acquired enough of the Russian language, to transact more than the most necessary and ordinary business of a traveller; and it was not probable that I should meet many Russians in this part of the country, who spoke any other language than their own. After some inquiry, I was told that there was a free Swiss in Irkoutsk who, it was known, spoke the Russian language, and it was thought, would gladly embrace the opportunity of accompanying me. I sent word to this foreigner, therefore, to request that he would call at my house; and as he had already heard of my want, he came prepared for the proposition I had to make to him. He had been some years engaged in preserving provisions for the use of the caravans which pass the desert districts of Siberia, and had become weary of this occupation, and he did not hesitate a moment to enter into an engagement to serve me in the double capacity of travelling servant and interpreter; and minor matters were easily arranged.

All or most countries and most people have their

holy months or days, and the Chinese are not among the exceptions. The most sacred of the Chinese festivals occurs during the moon that usually agrees with our month of February. This is called "the Festival of the White Moon;" and as we were now at that period of the year, it was important so to choose the time for this journey as to admit of our visiting the grave neighbours of the Siberians, in case it should be possible for us so to do, when they might be seen in their gayest, and probably their most accommodating, humour.

We left Irkoutsk on the first of February, in the little secure *sani* which I had brought from Krasnoyarsk. We set off in the evening as usual; but it was less on this occasion to conform to the almost universal custom, than that we might so time our stages, as to enable us to arrive at the shores of the great Lake Baikal, which lay directly in our route, at the proper hour to take the ice without any delay, and which, on account of the time occupied in crossing, and the necessity for daylight, ought to be at the beginning of the day.

I had not chosen this season, so much, indeed, on account of the festival for itself, as from the hope of more easily overcoming the greatest obstacle to entering the Chinese territory, which I was told I should experience. Some of the merchants informed me, that it would be impossible, and others that it would be dangerous, at any time, for an Englishman above all other people, to attempt to pass the frontier, on account of the hatred borne our countrymen by the whole population beyond the border. And as to any disguise, had I been willing to deny my nation, it was certain that it would be impossible to escape Chinese scrutiny. The enterprise at this time, it was thought, too, would be yet more difficult than usual, on account of its being known, or reported at least, that fresh troubles had just broken out in

the south of China between the English and the Chinese. Some other persons, nevertheless, were of opinion, that however invulnerable the heart of a Chinese at other times, there was at this holy season yet a portion of humanity found within it, sufficient to qualify its habitual ill-humour towards all people whatsoever for the time; so that, with the aid of the Russian superintendent at Kiachta, of which I was secure, through the introductions with which I was sure I should be furnished, and under cover of a Russian party, I might overcome all difficulties, and have the gratification of a peep at least into the little border town of the Celestial Empire.

As the moon was yet in her first quarter, and the sky as usual clear, and the temperature of the atmosphere at the moderate degree of 21 of frost, and the roads good, we set out with every prospect of accomplishing our journey with little difficulty, and in time to have a day or two's leisure before the day of the "full white moon," upon which, as it was that of the height of the festival, it was most desirable to enter the Chinese town.

The scenery upon the first stage of our journey was of the same character as that observed upon the opposite side of Irkoutsk. Rude hills of no great altitude, with scanty vegetation, consisting of stunted birch and dusky firs exaggerated to black by the contrast with the snow, every where prevailed; and we saw no signs of cultivation, until we arrived at the station and village of Pashkovskaia, thirty-three versts from Irkoutsk.

As we were rather early for the calculation we had made for passing the Lake Baikal, we determined to sup here at leisure. All that was to be obtained, however, in the house of the government station was a dish of cedar nuts, which are a favourite article of food with the peasants of Eastern Siberia. But we were well

provided with viands of our own, and we made a luxury of the nuts, in eating them by way of dessert. It was not the first time I had tasted this Siberian fruit. The good people of Irkoutsk of every class, albeit too well fed to make use of them as a proper article of food, often go about with their pockets full of them, and I had several times been presented with a handful, by visitors at my own house and elsewhere. It was the first time, however, that I saw them put as a dish upon the table, and may, therefore, be the proper occasion to make the mention of them that their importance in household economy, as well as an article of food in the country, seems to demand.

The Siberian cedar-nut is much smaller than that we call the Spanish nut, which is imported in such abundance among us. The shell is thin and crisp, and of a dark colour; but the kernel is soft, of an agreeable flavour, and a little darker in colour than that of the Spanish nut. But not only is this fruit of the desert at once a luxury and an article of common food with the peasants, but it yields, when pressed, also an excellent and very sweet oil, which is in general use, both for the same purpose for which we use the olive oil on the table and in the kitchen, and for lights, especially throughout these eastern districts of the country.

It was near midnight when we left Pashkovskaia; and although the moon was approaching her setting, it was almost as light as day; and we now observed as we proceeded, a sensible difference in the face of the country. The forest trees were here larger and thicker sown, with a greater proportion of birch; while here and there a pine was visible, that might have been recognised as of the same family, by the proud sovereign of the forest, even in Canada. We now, too, began to observe evidences of cultivation, which became more

frequent as we approached the immediate vicinity of Listvenishnava, the second station and village at which we changed horses upon our journey.

We were now not more than about five versts from the Lake Baikal. But as we had to make two stages upon the lake by its shores before we launched out upon the unsheltered and often tempestuous plain of its icy bosom, we remained here but a short time. Our reception at this place, however, I must mention, merely to show how necessary it is for the traveller to have every due protection in all parts of the country against the incivility and extortion of that class of the Russian *chinovnik*, against whom he has more need to keep a good guard than against any other kind of enemies whatsoever.

As I entered the station-room alone, I was greeted by the *smotritel*, or official in charge, with the well-known words "*Niet locharde*" (No horses), accompanied with well-acted expressions of regret, which I easily understood, but to which, however, I did not attempt to make any reply. The Swiss was not far off: and as he entered, I desired him in a peremptory tone, to inquire when we were likely to be despatched. And when he had done so; "Not until mid-day at the soonest, for there are no horses in the village," was the reply. "Present the *padarojnea*," I then said.

The *padarojnea* is a government order for horses which is granted the traveller at any of the larger towns from which he may happen to commence a journey; and, upon this being presented, the *smotritel* retired, without opening it, to his private room, to take, as is the custom, a copy of it, which is usually a labour of about half an hour. Within this ordinary document had been placed a circular letter addressed to all the post masters, and with which I had been furnished, in addition to my other letters, by the civil governor at Irkoutsk, for the governor-

general had not at this time arrived; and scarcely had sufficient time elapsed for this to have been read, when the same *chinovnik* entered, and, without a word of further parley upon the subject, desired to know when we would have the horses tackled. Thus, in spite of our reception, in less than a quarter of an hour from the time we alighted here, we were gliding again, by the light of the sinking moon, along our smooth way.

The fellow had been aware how necessary it was for us to arrive at the Baikal sufficiently early to take the ice in time to complete the passage of the lake by day; and he had told us what was not true, for the purpose of exacting money to work the miracle which the letter in the *padarojnea* accomplished gratis.

Our road was now along the banks of the Angara. This famous tributary of the Yenessei, is from this place to the great lake, open throughout the winter, by reason of the extreme rapidity with which its current flows; and it is on that account a remarkable object in the natural features of this part of the country. But as we saw nothing at present, save a dense mist arising from its running waters, I shall leave what might be further said concerning it, until we come to its banks again, along which we travelled by day on our return.

Half an hour from the last station brought us to the coast of the famous lake, of which I shall now endeavour to give such an account as the novelty of its character and its peculiar interest seem to demand, and the popular knowledge of it with passage across its frozen waters may permit.

The Lake Baikal forms an important geographical feature of the country in Siberia, and it may be said, also, in Asia. The centre of this vast sheet of inland water, lies in latitude 53 degrees North, and between the longitudes 104 and 114 East of Greenwich. Its greatest length from north-east to south-west, in which

direction it lies, is from 580 to 600 versts; but its breadth no where exceeds ninety or ninety-five versts: while the opposite coasts, near the centre at one point, approach each other within thirty-five versts. Its depth has been variously stated. Those who follow the reports of the inhabitants upon its coasts, contend that it has no bottom; and, moreover, notwitstanding that its waters are fresh, that it is connected with the ocean by a subterraneous channel. Others, again, state that its depth near the outlet by the Angara, is 800 fathoms, or more, as it is probable, than "plummet ever sounded." The most reasonable accounts, however, place it at twenty fathoms in some parts, and 150 in others, according to the distance from the land.

The climate of the coasts of the lake, owing to the elevation of the land, and of the surface also of the waters, is severe and variable throughout the year. The best Russian authorities place the level of the waters at about 1600 feet above that of the sea, and the summits of the mountains around, from 600 to 1000 feet above the surface of the lake. Thus, the short hot season, which usually commences at the epoch of the summer solstice, and terminates with the last days of August, is frequently interrupted by violent tempests, and cold winds, and sudden squalls, which render the navigation difficult and uncertain. The waters of the lake are extremely soft, and of a transparency most remarkable, even in their frozen state.

A hundred and seventy rivers from 600 sources fall into this great lake, the more considerable of which are the Angara, the Barganzinn, and the Selenga., Nevertheless, one river, the lower Angara, the sluices of which we have just passed by, forms the sole channel by which the united contents of all these rivers find their way to the ocean. The temperature of the water of the Baikal, as well as that of the streams that fall

into it, is at all times extremely low. That of the streams is said not to exceed 4 degrees of heat, and that of the lake not more than 10 degrees during the hottest days of summer. And the Angara, as it flows by Irkoutsk, is never above the temperature of 7 degrees; while the waters of the Lêna, the sources of which are in latitudes far north of those of many of the rivers that run into the lake, attain in summer, according to the exile from whom I received the chief part of this information, the temperature of 12 degrees, and are always, according to the actual observation of another informant, 2 degrees higher than those of the Angara. Yet, owing doubtless to the depth of the lake, and the agitation of its surface, it is not usually frozen over until more than a month after the most rapid streams of the country, except the Angara at the point above mentioned, are entirely closed. Nevertheless, the navigation, which does not commence before the epoch of the hot season above mentioned, closes, by reason of the prevalence of the tempestuous weather, about the middle of October, which may be two months before the lake is frozen.

The fish of the Baikal, notwithstanding the low temperature of the waters, are abundant and in considerable variety. Those most frequently taken are the *omullé*, which resembles the herring; the *sig*, which resembles, but is smaller than the sturgeon; the *askina*, the pike, the carp, the *lavaret*, and a white fish called the *tymain*. Besides these, there is a remarkable fish called *golomain* by the inhabitants. This fish seems to dwell in the depths of the lake, and escapes both the line and the net. It is only indeed seen, when thrown on shore during a violent tempest; and it can never be brought to table, and rarely even picked up, on account of its being of such a dissolvent nature, that the moment it is exposed to the sun, or to a very little of the action

of fire, it melts away, and leaves nothing but the larger of its bones remaining.

It is a remarkable fact, that the seal of the ocean is found in great abundance in the Baikal, since it is scarcely possible that such of these not very active amphibious animals as live in this lake, can frequent the sea, or ever make a visit to the briny deep at a distance of more than 2000 versts, and return against the current of one of the most rapid rivers in the world.

The aquatic birds which are found frequenting the Baikal, are the swan, the goose, the macrouse, and ducks in great numbers, and of great variety in kind.

The coasts of the lake present almost universally, high, rugged, and sterile mountains, composed for the most part of granite rock, at the base of which mica is every where found, besides limestone and gneiss. The traces of volcanic action are also recognised by the presence of basalt and *pyroxène*, which are found here in great abundance. Shocks of earthquakes are said, indeed, to be still felt throughout this vicinity; but I did not meet with any traveller or inhabitant of the country who had witnessed the phenomenon.

Scientific men have suggested several theories concerning the formation of this mighty sheet of water, which they suppose to have been during some great convulsion of nature. But there seem to be no other grounds for this opinion than those upon which rest all our impressions concerning natural phenomena, that carry us back to very remote periods in the geological history of our planet. Accounts, indeed, are given, of remarkable risings and sinkings of the waters at certain periods, which, if they be well founded, seem to prove that the volcanic action beneath, is still not entirely suspended. It is said, also, that the waters of the lake are frequently, and often violently, agitated during a

perfect calm. But as the waves are described as running on these occasions precisely like those which agitate the ocean during a tempest, perhaps this impression may be classed with others more certainly indebted to the superstitions which the lone country and the impressive face of nature, have produced upon the unenlightened inhabitants of its coasts. Hot springs, however, it is certain, are abundant in this vicinity. But perhaps there is no country in the smallest degree elevated where these are not found.

The conjecture above mentioned concerning the connection of the lake with the ocean by a subterranean passage, probably arose from the presence of the seals, and from the discovery of coral rock in the lake, which I believe is found no where else in fresh water. It does, however, seem impossible, that the quantity of water that falls into the lake by so many streams can be drawn off by the one single river and by evaporation. May we not say, then, that it is very possible that there is a narrow subterranean channel from the lake to the sea; for the surface of the lake being more than 2000 feet above the level of the sea, and the distance between the sea and the lake being about 1600 or 1700 versts, there could not be any reflux of the stream to affect the freshness of the waters of the lake?

Notwithstanding the severity of the climate, and the character of the coasts of the Baikal, the lower portions of the mountains towards the southern extremity are covered with forests of a variety of trees of at least the hardier tribes, among which are the birch, the aspen tree, and firs of different species. The cedar is even found here of 120 feet in height.

It is in the valleys, however, between the mountains, which are refreshed by so many torrents, that, in the words of my principal informant concerning all that regarded the lake, "*la vegetation deploie toutes ses*

richesses et toute sa magnificence." Here the *peuplier baumier* attains a growth which enables the inhabitants upon the coast of the lake to take advantage of its size to form their canoes of a single log. The *Pyrus baccata,* or apple of Siberia, the *Prunus fruticosa, cerisier à grappes,* the *Rhododendron dauricum,* and a quantity of shrubs and *Spiræas* of different kinds, display also in summer, all the rich variety of their foliage and their flowers.

In the same vicinity, are found in great abundance the more fruitful and choice shrubs—the raspberry, the *cassis,* the *Ephedra,* or golden fruit, with the perfume of the ananas; also divers *vacciniums,* such as *V. Myrtillus* (*airelle cherniza*), *V. uliginosum* (*veinée goloubitza*), *V. Nitis-Idea, ponctuée, brousnixa* (bilberry), *V. Oxycoccus* (*canneberge kliouxva,* whortleberry), *la mure,* known by its taste and perfume. In fine, the lily, the *pivoine liris,* the *Astragalis,* the *Hemerocallis,* the *Potentilla,* the *Centauræa,* offer a variety of colours and perfumes that we may search for in vain in many countries favoured by a more genial climate.

Of the wild animals upon the shores of the Baikal, the bears are the most numerous. The wild boar is also found. This animal subsists, like the bear, upon berries during summer, and cedar nuts raked up from beneath the snow during the winter. There are also martens, *gobéline,* squirrels, roebuck, foxes, wolves, and the lynx and the elk.

Such are the natural features, and the animal and vegetable productions, of the great lake of Siberia and of its vicinity. It remains to make a few observations concerning the people that inhabit its romantic shores.

Wherever we meet with men in a rude or simple state of society, we seem to find the imagination more or less impressed with feelings which correspond to the nature of the country in which they dwell, and to the character

of the scenery which they contemplate. Where nature has laid out the land in a fertile and unvaried plain, the nomadic or pastoral race which inhabit it, under the influence of the monotonous scene, relieved only by the rising and setting of the sun, appear to be impressed with a calm and placid character, which we often discover by a tinge of melancholy that appears in their music, or poetry, or songs. The tribes, on the contrary, which dwell among the scenes where variety and grandeur prevail, struck with romantic impressions, and with their imaginations little subjected to restraint, give way to superstitions which partake more or less of the terrible, in proportion to the milder or severer character of their religion, which is probably exotic, and the only additional subject upon which the pliant faculty of the mind has been employed. The scenery of which we have been speaking, and its effects upon the Bouriats, the aboriginal inhabitants of the country, form no exception to the general rule; and many superstitions exist among them concerning the sacred character of the lake, to which they give the appellation of the Holy Sea; and they express their impressions in varied and heroic songs.

All the superstitions of this people, with which both my principal informant, and others with whom I conversed on the subject, were acquainted, are upon the side of terror. They consist, for the most part, of impressions of the presence of evil spirits, by which the storms which prevail upon the lake are excited and allayed, and of the impression before mentioned, that the lake has no bottom.

CHAP. II.

JOURNEY FROM IRKOUTSK TO THE BORDER TOWNS OF SIBERIA AND CHINA—*continued.*

Descent to the Lake Baikal. — Coasting Journey. — Night Spectacle. — Superstitions accounted for. — Passage of the Lake. — Smoothness of the Ice — Transparency. — Causes of the Character of the Ice. — Fine Horses for crossing the Lake. — Thickness of the Ice. — The Rays of the Sun on the Ice. — Arrival on the opposite Coast. — Effects of Solitude upon our Energies. — A district Town. — A small Town. — Detention. — Composition of the Population of the District. — Roskolniks. — Bouriats. — Journey on the River Selenginsk. — Rudeness of the Country. — Very little Snow on the Land. — Leave the River. — No Snow. — Cultivated Land. — Arrival at Troiskasavsk. — Policy of the Russians. — Comfortable Lodgings.

THE traveller does not take the ice in the first instance at a convenient point of the lake for its passage, and we had yet two stages, making together about forty-three versts, to accomplish, before we could arrive at the point at which we were to launch out upon the icy plain.

The moon had some time since disappeared, when we descended the gradual slope which conducted us to the lake; but such was the brilliancy of the stars, that we could plainly distinguish the tracts of *sani* that had passed before us, as well as the land along the rude shores on our left, as we proceeded unobstructed by any inequality in the way, in a northerly direction. Here dark firs, scantily set in the white covering that concealed the earth, figured the varied forms of the high

and rugged hills; while in our front, the line of the horizon was plainly marked, by the abrupt termination of the brilliant lights, which seemed to shine with the same brightness at the very edge of the frozen element, that they displayed throughout the whole expanse of the heavens. And on our right hand, the existence of distant land of unequal elevation, was as plainly indicated by the intercepted rays of the lower stars in that direction. The scene which we were thus enabled to contemplate, was one of thrilling interest. The superstitions connected with this noble sheet of water thus suspended by nature amidst her grander features, must cease to be matter of wonder to the traveller whose path lies across its icy plain.

We arrived before break of day at Kadilnai, the first of the two stations which we had to attain before crossing the lake, which is at the distance of thirty-three versts from that which we last left.

There was no village here; and as nothing detained us, we changed horses with all possible expedition, and reached Goloustnaia, at the distance of fifteen and a half versts further, about three hours before noon. Here we breakfasted at leisure, that we might afford time for the sun, which now shone brilliantly upon the sparkling ice, to do his utmost, at least before we might reach the opposite coast of the lake.

At about ten o'clock, we found the mercury, which had been frozen in our thermometer when we arrived here, already risen to 26 degrees. And it was calm, and the sun shone full in our faces when we took the ice at this hour, with every prospect of a favourable crossing. But woe to the traveller, that should trust the elements and the smooth surface of the frozen waters of the Baikal for even the term of five hours without every precaution with respect to the time of day, to clothing, and to cattle.

Our horses, however, were of the finest that the country afforded. The best that can be obtained are kept expressly for the passage of the lake; and those with which we launched upon its bosom were almost as well furred by nature, as ourselves were by robbing the beasts of the land. They had, indeed, nothing but themselves to carry. A single horse might have drawn a dozen *sani* laden like ours. The perfect smoothness of the ice was only qualified at intervals by a little snow, gathered about the rough edges of some cracks which had obstructed its course, as the winds swept it along the surface of the frozen element. The lake had evidently frozen over during a calm, which must indeed occur at all times. It has been before mentioned, that owing to the continual agitation of its surface, and to its great depth, which, it is well known, is unfavourable to the making of ice, on account of the cold upon the surface being modified by the higher temperature of the waters beneath, it is only with the extremest cold, and when this occurs, the atmosphere is commonly at rest, that the Baikal freezes.

The appearance of the ice was so remarkable, that we were more than once induced to alight from our *sani* to examine it more particularly. We found it every where so smooth that we could scarcely stand, and we could not walk a step upon it. It was so transparent, too, as to be sometimes indistinguishable from the liquid portion of the element beneath it. Only indeed, where the lesser cracks appeared without snow, could its thickness be so much as conjectured; and notwithstanding that we judged this to be about six feet, which is four feet less than it is usually said to be, it was impossible for us to look directly beneath our feet, without feeling as if we were standing upon the water in its liquid state. I had been accustomed to travel upon ice many years before this; but I never before trod upon

an invisible solid that covered the liquid element beneath it. We looked in vain, however, for fish, which, if they like to be near the surface of the water at this season, doubtless have an aversion to being trodden upon, which they might well have expected at our approach.

The weather continued calm, or the atmosphere was so slightly agitated that it caused us no inconvenience. But such was the effect of the rays of the dazzling sun upon the ice, that, although the bright orb was far on our right hand before we had made half our passage, we could scarcely perceive even the coast that we were approaching, when we were within a few versts of its banks. In exactly five hours, however, from the time we took the ice, we arrived at Possoloskaia, a small village situated upon a neck of low land, stretching out from the proper mountain bounds into the lake, and at the distance, by some accounts, of fifty-five versts, and by others of sixty versts from the opposite shores.

After a hasty meal at this place, we resumed our journey. A few fences about the village, rising above the snow, indicated more cultivation than the character of the country had led us to expect. But as we proceeded, gradually rising to higher ground, we had nothing to relieve the interminable view of snow, and fir trees very thinly sown.

Soon after dark we changed horses at Steppnaia, called by some Dvaretzkaia, twenty-five and a half versts from the village where we had landed. We changed again at the villages of Kabanskiai and Tarakanovskaia, twenty-four and a half versts each stage, with the same scenery prevailing.

At the latter of these villages, we met a strange instance, in the case of the *smotritels* at the station, of the effects of solitude upon the interest men take in the world beyond their daily walk. The two worthy

officials here were so ignorant of all that did not concern their immediate duty, that they were not able to inform us the distance from their station to any other, except the nearest on either side of them, and not even either that to Kiachta or that to Irkoutsk.

Soon after midnight, we changed our horses at the village of Kunskaia, and early in the morning at a station, where there was no village, called Polovennaia Lastana (which two words signify in the language of the country *half-way-station*), and two hours before noon we arrived at the little district town of Verchneoudinsk.

Verchneoudinsk has no other claim to the dignity of a town, than the consequence it receives from the residence of a *gorodnichii*, or district master of police, a post-master, and one or two other public servants of inferior importance. It is, however, admirably situated upon the River Selenga, at the point at which the Uda falls into that river. The Selenga, already mentioned as the most considerable of all the streams that fall into the Lake Baikal, after taking its rise far in the Mongol country within the Chinese territory, and receiving the waters of the streams that proceed from the great desert of Gobi, falls at length into the Baikal, and contributes the greatest share of the waters that more than indemnify the great lake for the loss of what is drawn off by the great tributary of the mighty Yenessei, the rapid and ever-flowing Angara.

The inconveniences of a small town to the traveller in Siberia have been noticed upon a former occasion. And with a good knowledge of these, somewhat dearly bought, we were not able to pretend that we were taken by surprise, when told here, that we could not have so much as momentary shelter, nor even a room to restore our circulation, and thaw a morsel of bread, while the horses which were to take us on were wanting.

"We have to send three versts — no horses are to be got nearer," said the consequential functionary, when he had read the circular which had served us so well before. "All haste," however he added, "shall be made. But in the mean time, it is necessary that you should find a lodging."

It was happily day; and, we had indeed not much difficulty in finding a tolerable accommodation, although the room into which we were put was strewed with sleepers, who, as we learned, were in part inhabitants of the town, who had been burnt out during the preceding night, and in part, the conductors of a caravan lately arrived from the border towns to which we were proceeding. We had the misfortune, however, as it proved to be, to ask for some fish, instead of being, as we ought to have been, content with our own travelling stores: for, although we soon received notice of the horses being ready, we could not afterwards get the *samovar*, or our bread, which was taken to a separate building to be thawed, upon any terms, before a fisherman had been engaged, a shelter upon the river erected, a hole cut through I know not how many feet of solid ice, and that a fish thought proper to bite, and time enough had elapsed to cook it.

We had not, in reality, ordered the fish to gratify our taste or satisfy our appetites, but merely that we might have something to pay for; nor did we give the order until, in answer to our inquiries, we had been told that fish was to be had that was already caught; nor should we have waited for it, if we could have obtained, or in any way have supplied, the want of our bread and the *samovar*. We could not, however, complain of its dearness, when it came, if the time sacrificed in waiting were not taken into account, which was about two of the brightest hours of the day, for we only paid for it a few copeks. But it was a *sig*, the dryest and most insipid

of the finny tribes of the country, and neither of us, after tasting it, felt disposed to make a meal upon it.

The country round Verchneoudinsk is said to have a population of about 60,000 inhabitants, consisting for the most part of Bouriats, who are the aborigines of the country, and of Russians, who are the descendants of *Roskolniks*, or dissenters of the several sects from the Russian orthodox church, who were sent to colonize this part of the country during the violence of the religious persecution in the reign of the Empress Catherine. Of the Bouriats, it will suffice at present to remark, that they have the reputation of possessing greater steadiness of character, and of being more successful in the cultivation of the land, than their fellow subjects of Russian descent in this part of the country. Nevertheless, these Russians, amidst their religious fervour or profound obstinacy, are more successful than those who have not this strong bound by which their labours are concentrated and directed. One sect among them is the same with that which it has been stated still exists in considerable numbers in the eastern districts of Russia Proper, who have no priests, properly so called, and the simple offices of whose religion are performed by the ancients of their villages. There are likewise among them some of that sect, also before mentioned, the accommodating members of which support the children that are not their own, under circumstances which any one who heard it upon less authority than that which was quoted when they were mentioned, might be well excused for discrediting.

After passing Verchneoudinsk, the winter road lies upon the River Selenga, the course of which we now followed, until the last station before our arrival at the place of our destination.

To the next change at Restchinovskaia, which is a mere post station upon the banks of the river at the

distance of twenty-six versts from Selenga, we had wild hilly scenery, with a very scanty sprinkling of scrubby firs. We changed again at two other mere stations by the river-side, called Netessovskaia and Arsentievskaia, thirty-three versts to each. During the whole of this distance, we observed that the land was less hilly than that by which we had hitherto passed, with little appearance of vegetation above the smallest firs, and none whatever of cultivation.

After twenty-six versts more, we arrived at Selenginsk, to which the residence of the several officials of a district, as in other cases, imparts the consequence of a town, without its solid elements.

We saw nothing of Selenginsk, however, at present, save the interior of a remote and dirty little winter station-hut by the river-side. But, as we were several days here when we were on our return journey, the opportunity will occur for as full a notice as it may seem to demand.

To the next station, Nomachonovskaia, thirty-five versts, we had wild and hilly scenery, with little appearance of vegetation. Opposite this point, the eye was a little relieved by the novel view of a low island of about a verst in length, and covered with small birches, but which more resembled reeds than trees of their species in our climate.

The same absence of vegetation, with low land, prevailed throughout our course to the next two stations, Boutinskaia and Oustkiachtinskaia, thirty-five versts each. At the latter of these, which is the last upon the journey, there is a small village; and here we quitted the river for the first time since leaving Verchneoudinsk.

We had observed but little snow upon the hills or the lower lands for the last fifty or sixty versts; and, upon arriving here, we found the ground entirely bare. But as very little at any time falls in this vicinity, the

inconvenience is provided for; and the traveller, with his relay, is at the same time given a wheeled *tarantass* to continue his journey.

Nothing can be more refreshing to the eye than the bare ground, even without a particle of herbage, after we have seen nothing for many months but the white carpet upon the earth, which has concealed all colour from the view save that of the dusky firs where they may happen to grow; and this, especially, when we know we are soon again to lose the sight of the earth for some months to come.

We were here, too, gratified by the view of more stubble land than I had seen any where in the autumn in Siberia, with the exception alone of the immediate vicinity of Ikaterinburg at the foot of the Ural Mountains. These cheerful evidences of industry did not however greet us along the remaining portion of the journey. The road was now sandy, and, from its hardness, it was evident that there had been moisture on the ground. Nothing, however, obstructed our progress; and we continued our accustomed pace until we arrived, soon after the close of the fifth day of our journey, at Troitskosavsk, twenty-four versts from the last station, and about 400 from the banks of the Baikal, and 550 from Irkoutsk.

At Troitskosavsk the traveller is still four versts from Kiachta. But it is the nearest approach he may make to the sacred bounds of the Celestial Empire at the hour at which we arrived. A Russian governor, the agents of the Russian merchants, and a few tradesmen and artisans, with a view to the maintenance of peace, are all the habitants that are, by treaty with the Chinese, allowed to live so near the bounds of their empire. The immediate reason why this arrangement is so rigorously carried out is, however, said to be rather the policy of Russia than the obligations of the treaty. Every pre-

caution possible is taken by the authorities to prevent the smallest disagreement arising between the two dissimilar races which inhabit either side of the boundary line; for a mere broil might occasion troubles, that would deprive the Russians of their tea, now become among them even a greater necessary of life than we have yet made the "Celestial" beverage.

I had brought with me two letters of introduction. One of these was from the civil governor of Irkoutsk, as before stated, to the governor or superintendent at Kiachta, and the other to Colonel Roskildahoff, the commandant of a detachment of the mining corps stationed at Troitskosavsk. I had also messages, even from Tomsk, to a foreign officer of the same corps, in case I should visit this place, and who had been represented to me as exactly the man that every traveller must desire above all things to meet—that is to say, a gentleman well-informed, polite, and communicative.

It was too late when we arrived here to admit of my making the acquaintance of either of these gentlemen, in time for us to receive any aid in obtaining a place to lodge. We, therefore, desired the *yemstchik* to drive us to the house he thought most likely to afford us shelter; and we were agreeably surprised, both by the facility with which he found quarters and the character of the accommodations we obtained. The house, we found, though not an hotel, was well worthy of that appellation; for, though it had no beds, which, indeed, we did not want, we obtained two rooms in it, in one of which there were two chairs and a table.

CHAP. III.

KIACHTA.

Troitskosavsk.—Aspect of the Town.—Application for leave to enter Kiachta.—The Commandant.—Disappointment at not meeting a Foreigner.—Drive on the River Bura.—Arrival at Kiachta.—Description of the Town.—Population.—Character of its Inhabitants.—Visit to the Governor.—A Russian Painter.—Desponding Friend.—Treaty between the Russians and Chinese concerning Stragglers.—Jealousy of the Russian Merchants.—Effects of commercial Jealousy.

TROITSKOSAVSK is seated upon the left bank of a narrow stream called the Bura, which falls into the River Selenga, and between two ranges of sterile hills. It is one of the most irregular, and straggling, and least attractive of the smaller towns of Siberia. Its population is about 4000 souls, composed chiefly of the race descended from the ancient exiles, with some Bouriats.

Early in the morning after our arrival here, I mounted to the ridge of the hills which rise from the right bank of the stream, in order to obtain such a view as might make a lasting impression of a town so remarkable, on account of its geographical position, as well as its commercial importance. Nothing could exceed the dreary character of the landscape from this point of view. It presented the nearest approach to a colourless scene of any prospect I have ever beheld, that comprised both natural objects and any considerable number of the dwellings of men. It seemed as if a few patches of snow in the valley and along the summits of the hills would have afforded an acceptable relief to the sullen

prospect around. The buildings of the town are all of wood, and unpainted, and old, and so near the colour of the ground, that they were hardly distinguishable at this distance of scarce half a verst. The eye, indeed, of the spectator from these heights may range over hill and dale from ten to fifteen versts, in every direction, without encountering any variation from the colour of the dusky earth, save one or two buildings which belong to, though they can scarcely be said to be a part of, the good town of Troitskosavsk. One of these, the custom house, is placed upon an elevation, on the opposite side of the river below the town, and the other is the principal church, which stands in the centre of a wide open space, which divides the town into two nearly equal parts. The green roofs and white walls indeed of these only serve to make the want of the chief feature in the beauty of every agreeable prospect the more remarkable.

My next step was to call upon the commandant Roskildahoff, to whom I had brought my letter of introduction, and from whom I had been led to expect very useful aid. But the day commenced with disappointment. The colonel, contrary to the information which I had received from the gentleman who had procured me the letter, spoke no language but his own; and thus our conversation, which was carried on through an interpreter, was not very profitable. But I was still more disappointed now to hear that the foreign gentleman above mentioned, to whom I also brought a letter, and of whom I had had still greater expectations, was at the mines, at a distance of many days' journey from Troitskosavsk. I now heard, also, that the same inconvenience which had curtailed my intercourse with the commandant would attend any lengthened communication with the Russian governor at Kiachta.

My next step was to obtain a permit from the chief of the customs, which was necessary, in order to enter the little Russian border town. The building where this was to be procured being at some distance, I did not go myself to obtain this; and my servant, when he returned with the order, informed me that he had been questioned and examined for some time, and that it was doubtful whether he would have succeeded in his object, had he not produced the letter which I brought with me to the chief at Kiachta, which I had given him to make use of in case of necessity. The sight only of the address, however, upon this, removed all difficulties.

We now procured a droshky from the landlord of the house in which we were lodged; and, descending to the river, the ice upon which was not smooth enough to give any inconvenience to a wheeled carriage, while it afforded the most level road, we set off at the usual pace for the proper outpost of the Russian empire.

After a drive of four versts, we ascended the bank of the river, which brought us immediately to the barrier of Kiachta.

This remarkable little town lies in a valley between the same two ranges of hills which confine the town of Troitskosavsk, and is built upon an inclined plain on the right bank of the stream. It is sufficiently uniform in its plan and construction. A wide square occupies a central position in relation to the portions of the town upon three of its sides, but touches the neutral ground between the two great empires on the fourth side. Its upper part is formed by a church, which is in the centre, and the palace of the Russian governor. Upon the lower side appear houses of an inferior grade, between which short streets conduct to the river. Upon the side at which we entered the square, which was opposite to that of the neutral ground, appeared the

better sort of the private houses and two short streets. But towards the Chinese frontier there is only a palisade which marks the bounds of the neutral ground, and at the lower end of which there is a gate and a guard-house. Beyond this frail defence, at the distance of half a verst, appeared the walls of the Chinese town, above which were seen rising two gaudy pagodas, and one or two gilded flag-staffs.

The proper town of Kiachta consists merely of the streets above mentioned. But there are also here large storehouses for the tea and other Chinese merchandise, which may arrive at a season when it cannot be conveniently forwarded to Russia. These are placed apart from the private buildings, in the rear of the church, beyond the upper part of the square.

The private houses of Kiachta probably do not exceed sixty or seventy in number; but, being generally inhabited by the agents of the merchants, many of them are painted, which gives to the place, upon the whole, an agreeable aspect. The population of Kiachta, I was informed, does not exceed 300 souls.

I had expected to find here a little Nijhni Novgorod. I was, therefore, surprised at the absence of all appearance of business amidst the mightiest commercial transactions, at the very place of exchange of the products of the two empires to the value annually of many millions of rubles. There was, indeed, rarely, at any of the several times that I came and spent a considerable part of the day here, a dozen men to be seen at the same time in the square or in the streets; and above half that appeared were usually Chinese, who might be seen at intervals crossing the square at a creeping pace, in parties of three or four, with their small pipes and tobacco bags in their hands, and unaccompanied by any Europeans.

Few of the Russian merchants reside either at

Troitskosavsk or Kiachta, the greater part of the business being done by agents, whose principals inhabit the larger towns of Siberia and Russia, and pay those who reside on the frontier the liberal commission of seven per cent. upon the gross sum of their transactions.

As soon as we were sufficiently familiar with the public square of Kiachta and its narrow precincts, we drove to the government-house, which had been pointed out to us by a party we met in the square, in order to wait upon the governor, Gospodin Peterkoff, to whom, as before mentioned, I had been kindly favoured with an introductory letter from the civil governor at Irkoutsk. We found his excellency at home, and full of good-will. But he was taken too much by surprise to know well what he could safely promise towards enabling me to accomplish the chief object of my journey, the entrance into the Chinese frontier town; and he spoke only in general terms. The interview, however, closed by his requesting me to return to Kiachta the next morning, by which time, he said, he should be able to determine upon the best means of serving me.

There was yet a day between the present and the greatest of the days of the grand festival of the "white moon;" so that I retired satisfied with this interview, and in fair expectation of being able to see the interior of the Chinese town of Maimatchin before returning to Irkoutsk.

My next step was to search for the residence of a painter, to whom I had been introduced while at Irkoutsk, and who was now here, and employed in the decoration of the church above mentioned, and, by especial privilege, allowed to remain at Kiachta. We found the painter at his domicile, occupied with the son of the governor playing a game of Chinese billiards. The worthy gentleman, as far as I had been able to

judge upon my acquaintance with him at Irkoutsk, was by no means the most communicative person in the world; yet, in the absence of the gentleman I had chiefly depended upon at Troitskosavsk, every little aid that might be obtained was worth some pains to secure; and I thought I might, at least with the immediate news of the place, receive a few hints from him that would be useful, should I obtain permission to enter Maimatchin. And although I have not in this instance to acknowledge the same amount of obligation that I owe to many Russians for services upon other occasions of difficulty, the information I did receive was of some use, and was proportionably valued.

The painter was already acquainted with my design of entering the Chinese town, concerning which I had conversed with him at Irkoutsk, and, as soon as mutual salutations had passed between us, he began, after the mode of those who look upon the dark side of every thing, to enumerate all the difficulties to be expected in the attempt, and all the consequences that might follow either success or failure.

I myself am one of those who believe, that when we have once deliberately entered upon any enterprise, whether important or trivial, it is unwise to think of difficulties or evils until they actually obstruct our path towards the object we have in view. They are often exaggerated by being contemplated at too great a distance, and they seldom increase in magnitude as they are approached.

The painter began his communications, by stating that a treaty existed between the Emperors of Russia and China, by which all the stragglers from the territories of either into those of the other were to be sent back, and delivered to the nearest authorities within the empire of the sovereign of whom they were the subjects. He then informed us, that several Russians,

since this treaty was made, had been caught within the Chinese territory, and put into cages, like parrots, and brought upon camels' backs from different distances to be surrendered to the authorities of Kiachta. And to this he added, that, as it was reported here that a fresh war had broken out between the English and the Chinese in the southern provinces of the empire, and that it was certain that I should not be mistaken for a Russian, my treatment probably might not be quite so mild.

"Nothing," said the painter, continuing his counsel in a more energetic strain than he had commenced, "can exceed the abhorrence or terror concealed under terms of contempt, which the Chinese entertain for your nation. They say that you dwell on sterile islands in the midst of the great ocean, and live by piracy and the plunder of every people who honestly cultivate the soil and pursue the arts of peace. They say, also, that for your success in your depredations, you have been more indebted to the cunning of the fox, which you eminently possess, than to the voracity of the wolf, which they fear less. Mark, then," he continued, "with what pleasant eyes an Englishman is likely to be regarded at Maimatchin."

Upon hearing all this, I reminded the painter of the sort of protection I must necessarily be under if I entered the Chinese town; and, as far at least as the caging went, I should at most have but half a verst to travel. The rest of his desponding discourse I thought scarcely seemed to call for any reply that might not appear to reflect upon the good Russian for his credulity.

"You are not, however, a merchant," said the painter, resuming his discourse, and in a manner that did not seem to imply any doubt.

"I certainly am not," I replied.

"Nor come to buy nor sell?"

"For neither. I have nothing whatever to sell; and I shall certainly purchase nothing of the Chinese, unless I should happen to see a lady's fan, or some such bagatelle, that I might be tempted to bring away with me."

"Know then, notwithstanding," said the painter, "that you have another difficulty to encounter. You have the misfortune or the honour, as you may deem it, of having put every Russian merchant in this place out of humour for some days past, on account of a report, of which you have been the occasion, that an Englishman was on his way to make great purchases of Chinese merchandise at this place."

This, indeed, when I remembered the reports at Nijhni Novgorod, I found it very easy to believe, and almost as much so, to calculate the amount of the damage done to the Russian merchants. The rule of proportion might have been sufficient. If three Englishmen could cause a certain amount of mischief at the great fair at Nijhni Novgorod, visited by 300,000 strangers, how much should one cause at a commercial depôt of about 300 inhabitants, and not lawfully visited by any strangers at all?

"You have seriously deranged the market," continued the painter, "and caused great perplexity among the merchants, perhaps even on both sides of the neutral ground. But the article most affected is the Chinese sugar, of which it is said the Englishman expected was to purchase the whole that is to be obtained. It has, in consequence, risen no less than 60 per cent."

Perhaps it is not strange that jealousy of any kind should, like other passions, be productive of some follies; yet it is very strange that it should induce men so shrewd as Russian merchants to think it worth an Englishman's while to travel so many thousand miles to purchase an article which is greatly inferior,

unless eaten as a sweetmeat, to the ordinary moist sugar, which they cannot but know we import from our colonies.

The Chinese sugar brought to Maimatchin, it may be here remarked, when eaten alone, so much resembles the maple sugar made in Canada, that, in spite of assurances from several who ought to have been correctly informed, that it is extracted from the cane, cultivated like that from which our sugar is obtained, I still believe it to be the reduced sap of some similar tree in China to that of the maple in Canada.

Notwithstanding the desponding thoughts of the painter, I became convinced before we left him that he was friendly to my wishes; for, upon my informing him of my intention to mount the highest ground about the vicinity, to obtain, if possible, at least a bird's eye view of the "Celestial town," in anticipation of the possibility of a disappointment in entering it, he strongly recommended me to take no such step, but to return immediately to Troitskosavsk, and communicate with as few persons as possible while awaiting the determination of the governor, who, he believed, notwithstanding his good-will, might think less favourably of my request to-morrow than to-day.

CHAP. IV.

KIACHTA—*continued.*

Second Visit to Kiachta. — The Painter's News. — Jealousy of the Merchants overcome. — Causes. — My Servant's History. — His Speculations in Russia. — His Business in Siberia. — Inconveniences of carrying Merchandise in a *Sani*. — Causes of Change of Feeling among the Merchants. — Fire at Kiachta. — Conduct of the Chinese. — Their Superstitions. — Visit to the Governor. — My Servants. — All Obstacles overcome. — Inconvenience of having a Republican Servant.

On the day after my first interviews with the governor and the painter, I drove at an early hour directly to the government-house at Kiachta. I was disappointed, however, in my expectations of seeing his excellency, who, we were informed, had entered Maimatchin, with a deputation of merchants, to express publicly his acknowledgments to the Chinese chief, for timely aid which the Russians had received from him in suppressing a fire that had a night or two before broken out in Kiachta, and threatened the destruction of the town. Upon hearing this, I proceeded to call again upon the painter, whom I found at home, and from whom I had the gratification to learn, that one at least of the difficulties that were thought to stand in the way of my entering Maimatchin, which was the jealousy of the Russian merchants, and which was probably the greatest, had disappeared.

I must report the circumstances which led to this change, as they were related to me by the painter. But it is necessary, previously, to say a few more words concerning the character of my interpreter and servant, who had quite unconsciously a considerable share in

bringing about the fortunate change of feeling among the merchants. ''

The worthy Swiss was by birth and upon principle, a republican. He had left his home, like many others, in the full expectation of returning as rich in gold, as in knowledge of the world; but, like the majority of adventurers, in at least the former of these expectations, he had experienced nothing but disappointments. After travelling through Germany, and following his business in several of the towns with indifferent success, he at length entered Russia, and arrived at Moscow, where he opened a little shop, and sold hams, tongues, sausages, portable soups, and other similar articles. Many, however, of these were new to the Muscovites, and they did not deal with him liberally enough to produce the profits he had calculated upon, which he attributed to the fondness of the Russians for tobacco, brandy, champagne, and tea, against the use of all which luxuries he was a stern advocate, without, as it not always happens in parallel cases, being himself addicted to the same or worse indulgences than those he condemned. When he was well assured of the inutility of a longer stay in the central capital of Russia, he set out for Kazan, in which city he had been informed his business would at least have all the advantage of novelty. He commenced here, indeed, very well, as he had usually done in his speculations; and his business was daily augmenting, when some badly disposed persons spread a report among the Mussulmans, who had become the greatest of his customers, that his sausages, which were a prime article of his trade, were partly made of pork, notwithstanding his assurances, for the truth of which, he told me, he had offered them the evidence of their own senses, that they were wholly made of beef. His speculation, indeed, at Kazan had been among the most

unfortunate that he had made; for he had been literally driven out of the town by the cries of the Tatars for his expulsion.

After this, he resided for some time in one of the Russian villages; and he was about to return to his native hills, when he accidentally met some travellers from beyond the Ural Mountains, who assured him very confidently that Siberia was the field for the exercise of his skill in this novel mode to the inhabitants of that country of preparing food. For Siberia, therefore, he now determined to set out; but upon passing the mountains, his fortunes did not much mend; and, after wandering for four years through the western districts of the country, he came to Irkoutsk, where I found him, thoroughly tired of Siberia, and ready to embrace the first opportunity that might offer, to quit a country where, as he declared, nothing was thought worth purchasing but such supposed luxuries as were every where corrupting the manners and morals of the Russian people.

While making his arrangements to accompany me on this journey, he requested of me that he might be permitted to take with him any articles that should remain unsold at the breaking up of his establishment, to which I readily assented. It is the custom in travelling in Siberia, when you have but little luggage besides beds, which are always necessary, to fill up the vehicle, of whatever character it may be, with hay or straw. Now, although we had made less provision for this journey, and carried less than usual, I very soon found after our quitting Irkoutsk that the beds were much higher than they had been upon the journey from Krasnoyarsk to Irkoutsk. This might have been a matter of indifference, had we intended to travel only by day; but as I had made up my mind to take a nap during the early part of the night, I had given orders at the first station at which we stopped that the beds should be suitably dis-

posed, and this appeared to me upon my entering the *sani* to have been done. It was impossible to sleep, however. The road seemed more uneven than usual; and the beds rolled about as if they were resting upon loose stones. In a word, this led to my discovering that we were carrying a brave freight of large sausages, all of course frozen as hard as rocks. The circumstance was a great trouble at the time, and indeed during the whole of the journey; but we shall now see how amply this was compensated.

My discouraging, but honest friend, the painter, thus related the circumstances which had brought about the fortunate change of opinion among the merchants. "It was the most fortunate thing possible," said he, "that you brought a cargo of so useful an article as that which your servant disposed of yesterday in the town. The sausages have turned all your enemies to friends. Not an hour had passed yesterday after you left Kiachta before the terror of the merchants began to be dissipated by the report, that their suspected rival and supposed English millionnaire had proved to be only a sausage merchant. Some at first doubted the report. But all is now right. The load came this morning from Troitskosavsk to our apothecary, who is the purchaser of the whole for the benefit of the sick; and he has thawed and exhibited already certain samples that have confirmed the news and overcome all narrow suspicions and prejudices whatsoever. Thus, none of the commercial men will throw any more difficulties in the way of your entering Maimatchin."

"But," said the painter, in conclusion: "don't let any ill-timed pride on your part open the eyes of any one of the merchants, though you must explain the matter to the governor. His excellency will scarcely like to conduct a sausage merchant to the presence of the representative of his Celestial Majesty."

In addition to this news I received several other little pieces of information from the painter concerning his Chinese neighbours, of which, however, for the present, I shall report only such as may not seem to modify the favourable impressions which two visits that I subsequently made to Maimatchin were calculated to produce, reserving such as seem to show great inconsistences in the Chinese character, until we shall have reversed the picture which this curious little town exhibits.

The painter informed me, that a day or two before we arrived at Kiachta, the fire above mentioned broke out, and threatened the destruction of the whole town, and that it was extinguished by the activity of the inhabitants with the aid of the Chinese of Maimatchin, though not before a dreadful loss of life had taken place, and several houses had been destroyed.

The circumstances concerning this fire were as follows. The house at which it broke out was inhabited by a merchant and his wife, who were known to be a tenderly attached couple, with seven children. The merchant was from home when the fire broke out. The flames suddenly burst forth at the door, and catching the staircase which led to the rooms that were inhabited by the mother and children, and a female servant, cut off their retreat, so that they all perished together in the flames.

The fire spread with its accustomed rapidity whenever it breaks out in the Russian or Siberian towns, owing to the state of the wood of which the houses are built, which is so dried by the great heat kept within through the winter, and by the sun of summer, that were it not for the vacant space left between the buildings by the Russian style of forming the streets, scarce a village or town save the two capitals, where less inflammable materials are generally used for building, could survive twelve months. On this occasion it ran

along the pailings between the houses, feeding upon the wood in the yards, and was resisting all the efforts of the inhabitants to stay its course with all the water they could obtain, when suddenly a detachment of the people of Maimatchin, arrived with a train of camels laden with water in such quantities that the Russians were by this timely aid enabled to arrest the ravages of the destructive element, and preserve their town.

Loss of life and property from the effects of fire in Siberia, are among the more frequent of the calamities which the people experience. But it was the particular circumstances under which the Chinese gave their aid in this instance that render this fire remarkable, and call for the notice which is willingly prefixed to the little account of Maimatchin and its inhabitants which will follow.

The Chinese, we must first mention, are restrained by their religion from extinguishing the flames of any fire whatever. In Maimatchin, which is built of unburnt bricks and mud, with some mixture of wood, fires, though not so frequent as in the rival Russian town, nor so destructive when they occur, nevertheless sometimes surprise the inhabitants, who have on more than one occasion owed the preservation of their town to the voluntary and timely interposition of the inhabitants of Kiachta. When the flames have broken out, the pious Chinese have stood gazing with stupid awe at the ravages of the devouring element, while the Russians have generously rushed to their aid and extinguished them.

It is fortunate, however, that superstition, like other weaknesses of our nature, has its goal, lest we might, under the influence of such a powerful enemy of the faculty which determines our rank in the creation, degenerate to the nature which some philosophers think was the original condition of our race, and swim again like

fishes, or browse in the woods like wild beasts. There is always some saving point to screen us from the full consequences of its excess. A faint gleam of light seems to flash at intervals amidst the profoundest darkness, as if no part of our species were ever to be left entirely abandoned to the influence of impressions that have confounded their nobler reason, and already sufficiently degraded their nature. Thus, the very manner in which the Chinese in their turn rendered the generous service to the inhabitants of Kiachta in the hour of their need, while it will show us the existence and the force of the great enemy of truth to which may be attributed so many of the deplorable passages in the history of our race, is most agreeable to contemplate, as affording an instance of at least the partial triumph of reason over the very grossest of existing superstitions. The inhabitants of Maimatchin brought the water to extinguish the fire; yet the salvation of their own empire, or their own individual property, would not have induced them to throw a drop of it upon the flames, and after the water was delivered they stood gazing with the same awe or indifference at the Russian fire, that they were accustomed to gaze upon the fires in their own town.

But that which perhaps exhibits in the strongest light the character of the struggle in the Chinese breast, and the reality of their impressions, and which shows the most clearly the amount of the triumph of truth over error, is, that upon the morning after the fire, the chief and all that had aided in the charitable work of the preceding day, assembled in their temple to make a propitiatory offering for the sin of which they deemed themselves to be guilty.

While I was in conversation with the painter, the governor, and the deputation that had accompanied him, which may be said to have represented the commercial

interest of the Russian empire, returned from their complimentary visit to the Chief of Maimatchin. The Chinese were reported by one of the merchants who came immediately to the painter's with the news, as in high good humour at the warm acknowledgments which they had received for their friendly services upon the evening of the fire, and the painter now coupling what he heard with the happy circumstance of yesterday in my favour, was quite confirmed in his opinion, that no obstacle would be offered to my passing the gate of one empire, and entering that of the other, even that very day, in case I should desire it. Thus, well satisfied with this interview, I left my new friend, and proceeded with my interpreter to make another visit to Governor Peterkoff.

I have not mentioned, that I had been much annoyed upon my previous visit to the government-house, by the extreme familiarity of my republican servant with the Russian governor, which it was difficult for me to restrain. Upon the present occasion, however, I had given strict injunctions to the Swiss, that he was on no account to shake hands as he had done before, with his excellency, or make any advance towards such familiarity as he had shown upon the preceding day. The governor, however, whether from his having heard of the happy change in the feelings of the merchants by the cessation of their jealousy, or from any other cause, was ten times more warm and friendly than he had been before; and taking the Swiss by the hand, after he had paid me this compliment, he told him at once that there was no obstacle to our passing the barrier that very morning; and that, if we were ready to go, we should be accompanied by his interpreter, with whom the Chinese were well acquainted; and, moreover, that on the morrow I should accompany himself upon a visit which he had to make to the Chinese town of a different

kind from that of to-day, and have the distinguished honour of dining with the Chief of Maimatchin upon the principal day of the great festival of the "White Moon."

Not that all this, at the time it was spoken, was intelligible to me. The governor, indeed, had addressed himself rather to my interpreter than to myself; and the Swiss, who had caught my strong desire to accomplish the object for which we had come so far, upon the governor's concluding his communication, now seized his excellency's right hand with both his own, and pressing it to his bosom, began a discourse that I was obliged to stop, by reminding him that I was myself not yet acquainted with much more than I could guess of what had passed, and that I was waiting in suspense to know the rest.

The Swiss now communicated all that the governor had said; and as soon as I heard his excellency's determination in full, I thanked him heartily myself also, but without quite so strong outward signs of warmth as those with which my interpreter had favoured him.

We now left the government-house, accompanied by the aid above mentioned, and bent our steps towards the Russian gate, leading to the neutral ground.

CHAP. V.

KIACHTA.—MAIMATCHIN.

Origin of the Border Towns.—Relations between Russia and China.—Wars.—Russian Settlements on the River Amour.—Conquests of the Chinese.—Negotiations.—Treaty between the Russians and Chinese.—Russians lose an important Territory.—Moral Results of the Treaty.—Russian Church at Pekin.—Russian Students of the Chinese Tongue.—Character of the Traveller's Visit to Maimatchin.—Neutral Ground.—Gate of the Town.—Mixed Language.—The Border Towns.—Characteristics of the two People.—First Impressions of Maimatchin.—Decorations of the Streets.—Character of the Streets.—Dogs.—Desert beyond the Walls.—Chinese Caravan of Tea.—The Mongols.—The Grand Quarter of the Town.—Pagoda.—Sculpture.—Temples.—Monstrous Gods.—Idolatrous Worship.—Confucius.—Dresses of the Gods.—Another Chamber of Gods.—Decorations.—Lamps consecrated.—Artificial Vegetation.—Seat of Justice.—No Current Coin.—The lesser Streets.—The Canals of the Chinese.—Meanness of the Houses in the Poor Quarters.—Return to Kiachta.

BEFORE we find ourselves within the walls of the little Chinese border town, it will be well to make a brief reference to the events which led to the present relations between the great states that here encounter, and which gave to the towns of Kiachta and Maimatchin the importance they at present enjoy.

After the acquisition of Siberia, the Russians pushed their conquests beyond even the present boundary of their empire; and near the middle of the seventeenth century, they established themselves upon the great River Amour. This important river, after taking its rise at no great distance eastward of the spot upon which

we now stand, by the serpentine course of its main stream, and by its innumerable tributaries, waters the country for about 5 degrees further towards the south, and ultimately falls into the Sea of Ochotsk, still within the Chinese territory, about 3 degrees north of the present boundary line of the two empires upon the meridian of these border towns. This whole territory is of incalculable value, on account of the Amour being the most northern of all the rivers of Asia which communicate with the Pacific Ocean, and are of sufficient magnitude to be of any consideration in either a political or commercial point of view. The Russians, at the time of their conquest, appear to have been sensible of the importance of the acquisition, and they erected several fortresses, the more important of which were those of Albasin and Kamarski. They were scarcely, however, established in these, before the Chinese, with a strong force under Camhi their general, entered the same territory, with the intention of appropriating the fine watered country which it comprises. Thus the forces of the two great empires found themselves in the presence of one another, and hostilities commenced between them in the year 1680.

The Chinese first began their operations against the Russians, by laying siege to Kamarski; and though repulsed, they found means to harass their enemies and to cut off parties, whom they made prisoners, which put a stop to the operations of the Russians in their efforts to settle the country.

This state of the relations between the two empires caused the Czar, Alexy Michaelovitch, to send an embassy to Pekin; but from which, however, no result ensued, and the Chinese, now with augmented forces, attacked Albasin, and compelled the garrison to capitulate, and the Russians to cede their conquests. After this, they totally demolished all the settlements of the

Russians, and retiring, carried back with them a great portion of the inhabitants prisoners.

Soon after this, the Russians advanced again, with a force of 1600 men, and repossessed themselves of the country which they had lost, and constructed a new fort. The Chinese were no sooner apprised, however, of the return of their rivals, than they re-entered the country with a force of 7000 men and a large train of artillery. But after laying siege to Albasin, and battering the walls of the town for several weeks, they were not able to make any impression. In the meantime, famine and disease had nearly obliged the besieged again to yield, when the Chinese being apprised of a negotiation entered into by the courts at Moscow and Pekin, abandoned their enterprise and withdrew their army.

The Russians had sent an army into this part of their conquered territories about two years before this time, in 1685, but which did not reach Selenginsk, the last district town of Siberia towards the Chinese boundary, until 1687, where they remained inactive, for what cause is not stated.

Several events, however, together with the Chinese policy, delayed the settlement of affairs until 1689, when the Chinese boldly marched northwards as far as Nertchinsk, where they dictated to Golovin, the Russian commander, their own terms.

The treaty now made, was concluded in the reign of Ivan and Peter Alexievitch, in the year 1689, and is remarkable on two important accounts. By the terms of it, the Russians lost all that tract of country, and that great river by which it is fertilised, the value of which they seem to have forgotten, or did not regard. But at the same time, it laid the foundation for that important commercial intercourse which exists between the two great empires at this day.

Subsequent to these events, many minor misunderstandings at different times arose between the two nations, proceeding from the irregular and illicit commerce carried on by the merchants of the respective countries. In the year 1728, however, a treaty was concluded by the ambassadors on both sides, and signed on the spot upon which Kiachta now stands, which is still the basis by which all the commercial transactions between the two nations are carried on.

There was another result, however, of this treaty, which, though in a commercial or national sense, not of so much importance, has a moral interest well worthy of notice. It has been a step at least towards acquiring a better knowledge than we at present possess of the Chinese institutions, about which so much interest has been ever felt, and the true spirit of which such a thick veil still conceals. It appears that the Russians who were taken prisoners during the wars above mentioned, were at the time of the treaty of Nertchinsk, so satisfied with the treatment they had received from the Chinese at Pekin, to which city they had been carried, that they refused to avail themselves of a provision in the terms of this treaty, which allowed them to return to their country. A Russian church was even allowed to be built for their use; and a street was especially appropriated for their residence, and called after the name of their country. Moreover, by the above-mentioned treaty, in addition to these privileges, the Russian government was allowed to send youths to China, for the purpose of acquiring the Chinese tongue, from which have at least resulted some interesting translations from Chinese works by Gospodin Leontieff, who resided ten years at Pekin. The world, however, cannot compliment the Russians upon their progress in this way, or on account of any valuable information they have hitherto obtained. The people

that acquire all the languages of Europe with such extraordinary facility, have been able to make but slow progress with the Chinese.

The descendants of the prisoners above mentioned have intermarried with the women of their adopted country, and are, for the most part, now so perfectly naturalised as even to have embraced the religion, as well as the language, of the Chinese. A church, however, still exists within the walls of the Russian caravansary at Pekin, and Russian priests, who are exchanged every ten years, still reside, and perform the offices of their religion in the Chinese capital.

Since the treaty of Nertchinsk, the border town which we are about to enter, has been the Chinese depôt for the merchandise which is exchanged between the two empires, precisely in the same manner that Kiachta is the depôt of the Russians. It contains, at this time, a male population exclusively, amounting to about 1200 souls, and has about 200 houses.

I have hitherto almost spoken of the little enterprise before us, as if we had been about to pass the barriers of the Celestial Empire for some object that was worthy of martyrdom to attain. My enthusiasm, I confess, however, has never any where been of that character which might beget even a desire to see any institutions, political or religious, such as martyrs have given up their lives to reform, in the slightest degree shaken, before it might be certain, that in proportion as prevailing errors were eradicated, truth and civilised government and not new errors alone, as often happens, would establish themselves.

I shall now endeavour to describe what we saw in the little Chinese town, in regarding the place rather as a curiosity, than in its more important relations. Nevertheless, what fell under our observation during this and a subsequent visit to Maimatchin, may afford interest,

as a sample of the character of the ordinary intercourse between men who seem to have scarce a thought or idea in common, save only such as regard some few moral truths which are impressed upon every rational inhabitant of the earth.

Along all the boundary line of the two extensive empires between which we now stand, the sole gate of communication and lawful commerce, is that which we are about to pass, in order to see all that a stranger might be permitted of an isolated sample of the people that swarm throughout the rich and vast country that lies within the famous wall which marks their more proper territory.

A piece of neutral ground of about half a verst in breadth, separates the two dissimilar towns, and the two dissimilar empires. At the Russian gate which leads to the neutral ground, there is a guard-house, at which we found sentinels on duty; but, as the governor's interpreter was with us, we passed this barrier without meeting any obstruction.

In crossing the neutral ground, there was nothing to be seen of the Chinese town, on account of the height of the walls which surround it, in proportion to the buildings within, save the two pagodas before mentioned and the gilded flag-staffs, and the colours which were flying.

As we approached the town, we observed a screen set at eight or ten paces from the gate, covering the entrance, and constructed of the same materials as the walls, which are of mud and unburnt bricks, and from which it had not been distinguishable at a distance. As we passed round this screen, to enter the gate, we naturally looked for a guard-house and soldiers, or at least for a sentinel; but there was neither the one nor the other, nor any one armed or capable of resisting a child. A drowsy old man, a fit emblem of the institutions of his country, sat upon a low mud bench against the

inside of the screen, and immediately opposite the gate. He saluted our guide good humouredly as we appeared; and we now passed the gate, and stood in the principal street of Maimatchin, and the reality of long expectation was before us—the curiosity we had come so far to behold. The gate of the vast slumbering empire had turned upon its harsh hinges to admit the strangers, and we were, at least, in the Celestial dominions.

There is not a Russian or Siberian in Kiachta who speaks the Chinese language, nor a Chinese in Maimatchin who knows more than a few words of the Russian. Necessity, however, has been true to the terms of the adage, and begotten an intelligible tongue, composed chiefly of the Mongolian, by which the merchants of the two empires transact all their affairs. But even with this, our guide had but an indifferent acquaintance; so that we were not very confident concerning the advantages under which we should see the chief objects of interest which we were about to inspect.

The two border towns of Russia and China in every light they may be seen, are highly characteristic of the spirit of the people of the great empires to which they severally belong. North of the great line of demarcation, every thing wears the appearance of youth, and rapid growth, and advancement towards the superior degrees of excellence which we trust that the people of the Russian empire are destined to attain. But we no sooner pass the threshold of the gate of the empire of the peculiar people whom we are now among, than the figure of age and social decrepitude stands before us; and, were we not aware of the prevalence of a state of morals throughout the land that shocks every better principle that we have imbibed, the type now exhibited of Time's withering hand, might at least command our sympathy.

We thought it rather a disadvantage to us, that we saw the town in its holiday attire. The first view, however, of its streets as they presented themselves to us, in spite of the decorations which appeared in them, slightly reminded me of the disinterred ways of Pompeii. The gay dress of the principal street consisted of numberless coloured lamps and flags hanging upon strings across from the roofs of the houses on either side, from one end of the street to the other. The lamps were small, and some made of talc, and some of paper painted and figured. The flags were of gay colours and small, the greater part being mere slips, like short pendants. But the effect intended was spoiled by their numbers, just as it happens with one of our ships upon a gala day, by the abundance of her flags displayed, which gives her more the appearance of a laundress' red and blue shirt-drying yard, than the "thing of life" which no such tawdry ornaments can make more animate, or in any way adorn.

This chief street is narrow, certainly not above ten paces in breadth, and unpaved. The houses are built of unburnt bricks and mud and wood, and are of only one story, and windowless upon the sides which front the streets. As we walked slowly on, we observed gateways at nearly equal intervals, opening upon courts, in each of which there were several doors leading to independent apartments in the same house, which generally formed the whole court. The courts were decorated with flags and lamps in the same manner as the streets. The windows within the courts were generally large; and talc, or paper painted or stained, supplied the place of glass. The appearance altogether of some of these houses, was, indeed, more like that of a child's nursery toy, representing a fine building, than any thing real I had seen before. They were,

however, the dwellings of the richer class of the merchants of the place.

The chief street appeared to be about half a verst in length; but it was not wholly composed of these houses with courts. Towards the opposite extremity to that at which we entered, we found it lose this character, and consist of mean, windowless houses, presenting nothing of the neatness and propriety of the rest.

From one end of this street to the other, as we passed along, we saw but one human being, whose appearance, together with the silence of the streets, contrasted strangely with the gaiety of the decorations. This Chinese was standing as motionless as a statue, by the entrance to one of the courts, with a small pipe and a tobacco bag in his hand, and looking as if he were half asleep.

But although we saw but one biped inhabitant in the principal street, we did not reach the end of it without experiencing some of the inconvenience which the traveller in all parts of Siberia will become familiar with, from the dogs. The people of Maimatchin appear to have fewer dogs than the Siberians generally, and most of those they keep are of a smaller breed than those of their neighbours. Their dogs, however, are extremely vicious; and it is necessary that the stranger should be constantly on his guard against them. Our guide had been before bitten, and he had on this occasion furnished us with sticks to defend ourselves, even before we entered the town. And now when we came to the end of the street, and attempted to pass the gate which led to the open country, our passage was opposed by three or four dogs of a larger kind than those we had seen within, and the fiercest that I remember having ever encountered. Our sticks we found insufficient to keep them at bay. One of the more furious, to whom I had given a blow, after crushing the stick with his teeth,

tore my *schouba*. Thus, we were now actually engaged in a complete battle with these dogs, and in the presence of two Mongols, who were sitting upon the rail of a bridge that passed across a ditch or brook that skirted the wall of the town upon this side, and to whom the dogs doubtless belonged, but who did not condescend to use even their voices in our favour. I never felt more the want of a pistol in my hand, but it is a dangerous weapon for a traveller to carry in the streets of a town among a people whose laws, and customs, and language, are alike unknown to him; and happily we managed to vanquish our canine foes with the weapons which we carried.

When we were beyond the gate, the building of a great tea depôt at the distance of half a verst, formed the only object of relief to the eye fixed upon the dark waste surface of the sterile and snowless ground around. It is a low building, and appeared not unlike the *gostinnoi dvor* of the Russians in some of their smaller towns. I wished to visit it, but the guide, whether influenced by his fear of the dogs or of the Chinese, declared this to be forbidden; adding, that he had received strict orders from Governor Peterkoff before leaving the palace, to be especially careful not to go a dozen paces beyond the walls of the town on this side.

There seemed to be about 300 or 400 camels, standing and lying, and loaded and unloaded, near the building; and we heard that this was the second detachment of a caravan from Pekin of 2000 of these beasts, all laden with tea, and that it had just arrived. But the scene was not here wholly Chinese. The men that had conducted the caravan, and were now engaged in unloading the beasts and storing the merchandise, were all Mongols. As far as might be judged from the few we saw of this ancient people in their own land, we recognised the traits of a finer and far more active

race than the Chinese. Their costume at this season nearly resembled that of the Bouriats within the Russian province, who are in effect a tribe of Mongolian origin. They wore large fur caps, and *schoubas* of sheep or deer skin, girdled with a scarf at the waist, after the manner of the Russian peasants. And they wore their hair plaited, and in two tails hanging down to their girdles.

After again entering the gate, and turning upon our right hand at about a 100 paces from the wall, we came to the grand quarter of Maimatchin. A broader but shorter street than that which had conducted us from one end of the town to the other, here lies at right angles with the main street, and terminates with a temple and pagoda. Before, however, we reached the well-known and thoroughly national edifice, we found the houses fall back upon both sides, and form a square, or open place, sufficiently large for at least a spare display of Chinese art. Upon our left hand, stood a fantastic building like the ground story of a pagoda, and a little in advance of this, a sample of Chinese sculpture. Two beasts finely gilded, which were certainly intended to represent either lions or leepards, though we were not quite sure which of these animals they most resembled, here sat upon two pedestals about eight feet from the ground. And in the middle of the square, and opposite to these specimens of art, two gilded poles displayed the national colours. This square, however, is only the front of a series of courts and edifices, of which it is necessary to give a more particular notice.

Upon either side of the chief edifice here, there is a narrow gateway leading to the more remarkable places in the town. After passing one of these, and making our way across a court and through a second gateway, we found ourselves in the midst of a fresh exhibition of flags, and of lamps in abundance, and presently, to our

surprise, in the centre of a theatre, consisting of an open circular building of about thirty paces in diameter, and decorated in the same manner as the streets of the town.

From the theatre, in which we did not at present remain to examine any thing in detail, we passed through a passage directly opposite the stage, to a square space, with the same description of houses upon either side as those we had seen around the courts in the main street, and which now brought us to the chief pagoda and temple of Chinese worship at Maimatchin.

The temple appeared to consist of several courts and edifices, both open and close, with some regard to unity of design. A priest, or some official of the sacerdotal order, who was seated upon one of the steps in front of the most conspicuous portion of the building, recognised our guide as we approached, and rose and introduced us, without any ceremony, into the presence of a brave group of deities, whose colossal frames and hideous faces were quite enough to characterise the religion of the people as one of the many by which men are frightened into subservience and blind obedience to the will of a cunning and usually debauched priesthood. There are five of these worthy evidences of the facility with which men may be terrified into respecting and believing the most ridiculous things to be superhuman, by the devices of deceivers interested in crushing every thing that leads to the promulgation of truth and knowledge. The most frightful of the monstrous idols represents the Supreme God of a large portion of the Chinese idolators, as well as of the Mantchous and Mongols. He is seated in a niche between two columns and supported by two youthful female figures, and appears in the act of reading a tablet. This grim fellow is called by the Chinese *Looyee*, and by the Mongols, *Ghussur Khan*, and by the Mantchous, *Guanloë*. His

face is of burnished gold, and his hair, which is black, hangs across his yellow cheeks and mingles with his beard.

He wears a crown on his head, and he was now dressed in rich robes of silk. On either side of this pattern of idols and of gods of terror, are seated two other deities of inferior celebrity and power. Also within an enclosure in front of *Looyee*, there are four more of the brave tribe, that might rival the supreme among them in the hideousness of their features. These have a more warlike aspect, and appear habited in full armour, and carry offensive weapons.

The stranger might hope to find in some of these, at least some faint indications of the degree of refinement attained by the classes of the Chinese people of which he cannot suppose the inhabitants of Maimatchin to be a very fair sample—something to hang a conjecture upon concerning the state of the arts generally at Pekin. Within any temple in which men bow the knee and adore even the molten image, we are accustomed, and might expect, to find some symbol of supposed divine things, sufficiently well conceived and executed to excite a little sympathy or respect from all who enter therein. Had there been the smallest trace of benevolence, or of any one of the human passions that touch our affections, upon the features of the face of one single deity among those which seemed to be adored by a numerous section of people, we might have hoped that a way was open for the introduction among them, at some favourable epoch, of at least the purer system taught by their great philosopher. It is true, that all or a great portion of the higher and the learned classes of the Chinese profess the well-known doctrines of Confucius; but the most perfect indifference seems to prevail among them concerning the religion of the masses of their countrymen. There was

certainly nothing here to indicate that a particle of the spirit of the system of the great moralist had ever entered into the composition of the Chinese mind. The most positive ugliness that the human countenance could exhibit, with the expression of the passion of anger to the degree calculated to excite the greatest terror, were the only characteristics that might be discovered in all the deities that were represented.

The priests of the idolatrous religions among the most primitive people, whether their deities were of brass or of wood, seem never to have risked the reputation of their spiritual hierarchy, by the presentation of the image of one passion alone. Nevertheless, some among the Chinese, whose priests in general are perhaps the best schooled in deception of any of the order, have shown us the proofs, in trusting to the image of anger alone, how much more we are by nature given to the fear than to the love, of all spiritual beings in which we believe. The impressions with which we left this temple might possibly have been somewhat modified, had we been permitted to attend at the hour of worship; but from all that we subsequently heard of the morals of these Chinese, I am led to believe, that only such among mankind as address their prayers under the influence of fear rather than of gratitude, could sympathise with, or find any common bond of interest with, the worshippers of *Looyee.*

The dress of the figures resembled neither that of priest nor warrior, nor of any fanciful god or demi-god that I had ever before seen represented. An exaggerated clown's or pantaloon's dress of the pantomime, was the only thing to which it might be compared.

Another department of this temple consists of a gaudy building of one story, occupying the whole of the upper side of the little square in which it is placed. It has a flight of wooden steps in front of it, and a colon-

nade. The buildings on the rest of the sides of the square, have also steps before them, which reduce the level area in the centre to one half the dimensions of that which would be formed by the walls of the buildings. Lamps of talc and coloured paper were also displayed here, with the same too great profusion as every where else.

We ascended the flight of steps in face of the gaudy portion of the building, the whole front of which was open, save a latticed screen across a part on either side, and a low railing across the rest. This part of the temple appeared as if it were, on the present occasion at least, the most sacred. We were not permitted to pass the gate of the railing, though we could not say that we had any of the difficulty in fully viewing what was within, that Mussulman fanaticism throws in the way of strangers entering most of the mosques. Two fellows were here busily occupied with the extra decorations for the next, the most sacred of all the days of the festival, and of the year. Our guide could not, after the priest had forbidden us to enter, help making signs to the men occupied within, to signify our wish to pass the barrier before us; but they, by the same means in return, gave us to understand, though evidently in good humour, that although our sight might gratify its full sense, the pressure of a Christian foot within the edifice at this particular time would be too great a profanation to be tolerated. Nothing, however, that was within, was hid from our view. The dimensions of this distinct portion of the temple are by no means large, but the form is peculiar. It might be said, without an Irishism, seeing that the throne and altar by which the gods within stand, or upon which the holy emblems rest, must be considered one of its ends, that its breadth is greater than its length; which is, at least, a very awkward form for any work of art. From

the screen in front to the several slabs which project from the back wall, and exhibit the chief riches and decorations, the extent is not above five or six paces; and three more probably make up what has been called its length; while its breadth is the entire length of the platform of the colonnade, which is not much less than that of the square, or from about twenty to five and twenty paces.

The decorations in this portion of the temple consist almost wholly of artificial trees and flowers, which are in very great variety. Some of these would be exceedingly beautiful apart; but the enormous quantity of them wholly destroys their effect, and gives the place the appearance of a horticultural show.

To this monotony, however, there was some relief. Two colossal figures of warriors, or deities, were standing one on each side of a sort of altar in the centre, though they were half hidden by the flowers and tall shrubs which flourish about them, and a number of lambs slain and consecrated for the occasion, were lying upon the slabs which projected from the walls around the three closed sides of the building, amidst all the profusion of artificial vegetation.

On both sides of the temple there are passages of the same kind as those which we passed through in our way from the street. These lead to another court, in which stands the palace of the *Surgutchay*, or Governor of Maimatchin. We were not, however, at present permitted to proceed further in this direction.

In another court, we found two aged men sitting at the extremities of three or four steps that conducted to an estrade beneath a wooden shed, and upon which stood a sort of throne. This, the guide informed us, was the seat of the chief, when he sat in judgment upon offenders against the law, or to administer justice in case of civil disputes. Near at hand, we observed

sundry instruments of punishment and of torture, such as bastinadoes, whips, collars, chains, and others of which it was impossible for us to comprehend the application.

We now returned upon our steps to the street from which we had entered this close, and sacred or profane place. We found all as silent as before; and, I now requested our guide to introduce us into any place that might resemble a shop. But there was nothing of the kind in the town; and, if there had been, as there was no current coin, there would have been no means of making any purchases but by exchange of articles of merchandise. Had we, indeed, had any objects of value, we might have exchanged them for others with any of the inferior merchants. But without such objects, we had not even an excuse for knocking at any door. We nevertheless entered one or two of the private courts. But although coloured lamps and flags decorated them, the absence of any thing in motion in any form within their contracted limits, made them appear in the highest degree gloomy and inhospitable.

We next passed to some of the lesser streets, all of which we found partaking more or less of the same character as the one we had first entered, without its decorations, though narrower and meaner in appearance. In one of these, however, we met a train of camels laden with European merchandise, which they were carrying out of the town.

This afforded me an opportunity of comparing the camel of the cold with that of the hot regions of the globe. The apparent difference consists in the darker colour and warmer skin of that of the north above that of the south. The coating upon the skins of some of these resembled that of a shaggy brown bear. They appeared of a larger size, too, than any I had seen before.

But as I did not measure any of them, I cannot be certain that this was not the effect of their superior covering, or of a deception caused by the miniature character of every thing in sight of which they stood.

In the sole street in which we saw any movement except that in which we met the camels, a tenant of one of the houses opened the door of his dwelling, and left it open while he passed to the opposite side of the street. This afforded us at least the opportunity of gratifying our curiosity to see the interior of one of the smaller houses, and we determined to profit by it. But as our guide would not so much as approach the door, to ask any such question as he might be able, for an excuse to enter, we placed ourselves upon the threshold, that we might see if there were any thing worth our taking notice of within. There appeared to be no furniture in the room, except two wooden stools which rested upon the bare ground. But upon one of these sat an old man in tattered attire, and very little of that. He was, however, hanging over a fire of charcoal, or live ashes, which was upon the ground. I addressed him in the Russian words for good morning, but received no reply. He merely raised his head, as if to look who intruded, stared sullenly for a moment, and then dropped his eyes, and hung over his fire again as if nothing had attracted his attention. From this we passed to the gate at which we had entered the town, and, by the neutral ground, returned to the Christian land.

CHAP. VI.

MAIMATCHIN—*continued.*

Difficulty of disciplining a Republican Servant.—Rendezvous at the Governor's at Kiachta.—Politeness of the Governor.—Embarrassment.—Drive to Maimatchin.—Silent Reception from the People.—Clamorous Reception by the Public Servants.—Effects of the two Extremes on the Spirits.—Arrival and Reception at the Government-house.—Greetings of the Representatives of Majesty.—Introduction of the Siberian Party.—Appearance of the Chinese Chief.—His Rank and Family.—The Palace.—The Apartment.—The Dinner-tables.—Chinese Conserves.—Method of Serving and Eating.—Rich Cookery and Correctives.—Difficulty of Eating Chinese Fashion.—Chinese Brandy.—Tea.—A German *Atcoopstchik.*—Scene in another Department of the Room.—Extravagance of Chinese.—Manner of Cutting Meat to serve up.—Abhorrent Accompaniments of the Feast.—Visit of the whole Party to the Theatre.—The Play.—Disgusting Acting.—The Party make their Exit to proceed to a Merchant's.—Supper at a Merchant's.—Ceremony.—Extravagance.—Wines.—Six other Suppers.—Separation of the Party.—Return to Troitskosavsk.

On the morning of the day of the full "White moon," we drove at an appointed hour to the government-house at Kiachta. I had heard so much of the etiquette to be observed at the Chinese governor's table, at which I was to be this day a guest, that I thought it necessary to put such order in my arrangements, as might seem to agree with the circumstances under which I made my appearance, and the character in which I was to enjoy the distinguished honour anticipated. My interpreter and servant, notwithstanding his republican predilections and his unintellectual avocation, was by no means wanting in good sense,

and was easily convinced that it was necessary for this great state occasion, that the little difference of rank that had been hitherto maintained between us, should be somewhat widened. He was, however, rather startled when I explained to him the character and the manner of carrying out our new relations to each other, which must now take place. In fact, I informed him, that it became necessary for me to assume an importance which, indeed, I had not even the ambition to attain, and put him in a position which he was certainly not born to fill. It was proper, I told him, that he should on this occasion stand behind my chair at dinner, instead of sitting beside me at the table, as he had done in the cottages of the Siberian peasants; and, moreover, that he should watch the movements of the Russian governor's servants, and imitate the most accomplished of them, even to the manner that they might take a kick, should such a chastisement be deemed necessary to the dignity of a European gentleman when at the table of the representative of his "Celestial Majesty."

The Swiss seemed, indeed, rather embarrassed and very grave at this communication; but when I insisted that his assent to the full terms of the proposition must be the condition of his accompanying me, his curiosity concerning what we might see, overcame his just scruples, and he assented to the prescribed terms with a tolerably good grace. However, lest he should be less manageable than I could wish, I contrived to spare him as much of my wardrobe as would place him so nearly on an equality with myself in the important particular of dress, that, happen what might, the Chinese eye could not be offended, nor a due respect to their chief suspected.

When we entered the reception room of the Russian governor at Kiachta, we found a party of five or six

persons assembled, all of whom, it was easy to perceive, were awaiting the same favour at the hands of his excellency, who was not yet present, that myself had been already promised. They were all merchants, or the representatives of merchants residing in the Russian capitals; and as I was anxious to obtain some hints concerning the business of the day, I entered into conversation with them, by the aid of my interpreter, before any one took a seat.

Our discourse did not prove very fruitful, but continued, until arrested by the appearance of the governor, who, rushing in with characteristic Russian precipitation when the spirit is awake, shook hands heartily with several of the party, and forced us all to be seated, and actually placed my so lately lessoned domestic upon the last chair, and would, if it had been permitted, have kept us all sitting while he remained himself standing. There was this consolation, however, we were not yet in China, and I might still have time before we entered the gates of Maimatchin, to reconstruct the frail edifice of my so lately assumed importance; and, as I knew I could not now speak with the delicacy the moment demanded, through an interpreter who would be the subject of the communication, I merely, after rising myself, desired the Swiss to do the same. The Swiss obeyed, and such a scene of bowing, with complimentary speeches, now took place between the representative of his Imperial Majesty and the honest sausage maker, as is sometimes seen to pass between an especially noble guest and a worthy burgess host.

Only a short time now passed, before we were all in our droshkies, and on our way to Maimatchin, escorted by a detachment of mounted Cossacks. We drove Russian pace through the first barrier, and across the neutral ground. But such was the state of the ways in the Chinese town, which are pressed by horses' feet and

bear wheel carriages but oncea year — for the inhabitants have neither the one nor the other — that after we had passed the gate, we were forced, whatever might have been the proper etiquette, to assume a procession pace.

As we proceeded thus slowly, still accompanied by the Cossacks, the Chinese people were gathered on either side the street, to gaze upon what could only have been a novel spectacle to any that might never have passed the Russian barrier. We concluded, therefore, that they came to do honour to the guests of their chief. There did not appear among them any other feeling than a slight degree of curiosity concerning, perhaps, our equipages, if, indeed, there was even that; and we passed through the grave mob directly up the main street: and, after turning where we who had been there the day before had left it, on our way to the temple, we arrived at the gate leading to the first of the courts before mentioned. Here we all alighted, and entered the gate in procession; the Cossacks bringing up the rear, also now on foot.

Up to this moment, all that we had seen of the Chinese, in spite of the novelty of the scenes, and of their gay flags and their coloured lanterns, wore a gloomy air, and was depressing to the spirits. But we no sooner now gained these courts, than the scene confounded us by its grotesque drollery, and sounds greeted our ears that seemed sufficient to raise up the very ghosts of the passed generations of men who sleep tranquilly in the Mongolian desert. Such a clatter, such a *chaṛivari*, such a row, I never heard before. The court was full of musicians and clowns in a dozen different fancy dresses, and all were striving one against another, which should jump highest, or assume the greatest variety of attitudes in the shortest time, and who should make the greatest noise, that many rude

instruments which they played upon were capable of producing. Some beat drums and some tambourines, and some played an instrument similar to the bag-pipe; while all harmony, if there were any among the inferior instruments, was confounded by the thrice-deafening sounds of the gong. Noise seemed, indeed, every thing required, and the best musician, he that blew the pipes, tugged or scraped the strings of his instrument, or struck the gong the hardest. But whether there be any meeting of extremes in the effects of sounds, as in many other things in nature, this I know, that whereas I felt depressed before we entered this court, by, as I supposed, the silence that reigned among the multitude, so I never felt more exhilarating effects upon the spirits from the "concord of sweet sounds," than I now felt from these discordant and deafening noises.

Passing now this court, no doubt, all present being in the same frame of mind and good humour as that which I found myself thrown into by our clamorous reception, and also the court of the temple and the court where our steps who were of the party of yesterday had been arrested, we soon reached a court formed by the palace of the *surgutchay* or governor of the town. And now, literally rushing along under the quickening effects of the brave music, with no more dignity than we might have pressed to see a curiosity bazaar, we came in this haste and disorder into the presence of the representative of the great Asiatic Emperor, who received the Russian governor, standing near the bottom of a flight of steps that led to the door of his palace, with a hearty European shake of the hand.

The greetings of the two representatives of majesty being over, the Russian chief turned to introduce his party, which he did one by one, in using expressions,

that it was fortunate it was not very important should be understood; and we had thus all successively the distinguished honour of shaking hands with the representative of his Celestial Majesty.

The *surgutchay* was a man of about sixty years of age, and of easy and polite manners. His dress was the same as that ordinarily worn by the Chinese, and did not appear to us to differ from that of the merchants, or even of his own servants that were in attendance, and is too well known to require description. We heard nevertheless, that he was of one of the highest families of Pekin, and that he was even a relation and friend of the Emperor himself. And we were likewise told, that the place he now filled was more lucrative than even many of the governments of the larger provinces, and that he was extremely rich.

The palace is an edifice of only one story. It has the door in the centre of one of the sides of the court which the building forms; and glass windows, which are not found in any other house in Maimatchin, form nearly the whole of its front, and one entire side of the court.

The two chiefs now entered the palace, followed by the Siberian party, which had a little augmented since we left the Russian governor's at Kiachta. We found a single large apartment, occupying the whole of the front of the building, the offices and other rooms being in the remaining portion. Upon our left hand, as we entered, appeared numbers of servants occupied in making arrangements, or preparing various appurtenances to the feast; and upon the other side there was one large table filling half that division of the room, and several smaller, set in a similar manner to those of a French restaurant.

As soon as the two chiefs had taken their places at the head of the largest of the tables upon benches which

served the place of chairs, all the Europeans and Siberians were requested by several Chinese, who seemed to do the honours like so many masters of ceremonies, to place themselves wherever they might find it most agreeable to them to sit. I seated myself two or three covers from the chief, at the principal table, and allowed the Swiss, after all, to place himself beside me; for it was easy, by this time, to perceive that of ceremony there was in reality little or none; and it would have been wrong to persist in the arrangements agreed upon.

The same *charivari* which had greeted our entrance to the series of courts through which we had passed, now commenced again in the court of the palace, as we seated ourselves at the tables. Our party still continued to augment, until there were between fifteen and twenty Europeans and Siberians seated at the different tables. There were also about the same number of Chinese in the room, all of whom had occupied themselves in accommodating and placing the guests, and were supposed by us, while they were thus employed, to be the *élite* of the population of Maimatchin, who had been invited to meet us at dinner. But after the feasting began, upon observing that none of them sat down, we made inquiries through our Mongol interpreter, and were informed that there was not a Chinese in the town of sufficient rank by many grades to sit at table with the chief, and indeed, that all those who were doing the friendly offices for the foreigners for whom the entertainment was solely intended, were only the servants and dependents of our exalted host. Nevertheless, we were told, at the same time, that there were other guests, whom we did not see, entertained in other chambers, according to the usage of the country, upon the sole occasion during the year upon which they were admitted into the palace.

There was nothing on the table when we seated ourselves; but presently, several large trays, resembling Pope-Joan boards, were placed before us, each of which contained about a dozen compartments, which were filled with different kinds of conserves. And at the same time, we were every one furnished with a small plate, a cup, and a little case knife resembling a dagger, and a pair of what are commonly called chopsticks by Europeans, which are used for forks, and which precisely resemble our ladies' knitting needles. The conserves were of as many different kinds as there were compartments in the board, and were cut into pieces about the size and of the same form as dice. Their appearance was so tempting, that I could not help tasting nearly every kind; and I thought some the nicest, and some the reverse of every thing of the sort of which I had ever before partaken. Some were sweet, and these were excellent, and some were sour, which were indifferent, and the rest were bitter and abominable. Yet they were so disguised, or so new to a European, that of all the tastes I am acquainted with, I could only distinguish the flavour of the Siberian apple and that of the lemon.

When all the party seemed to have eaten sufficiently of these, we were every one furnished with a shallow bowl, beside which was set a cup of vinegar. A large dish was now placed upon the table, filled with small morsels of roasted sucking pig floating in game broth. To serve ourselves in the most convenient manner with such portions of this as we pleased, we were given spoons so constructed as to admit of the broth retiring into a tube in the handle when the pieces of meat that were taken from the dish were put upon the plate.

To make use of the chopsticks after the Chinese manner, which is with one hand, is impossible for a European of less skill in the use of his fingers than a conjuror; and I confess, that I thought at first that

our condition would be as bad as that of my former fellow traveller and myself when we were entertained by the Kirgeeze, and that the *surgutchay* would be the only one able to get at the food on his own table. Had this been the case, however, it would not have been the fault of the hospitable and not greedy Chinese, who in pity for the deficiencies of his guests, which he very well knew, had, at least, taken care that we should not want proper instruction in the art of genteelly conveying the delicacies of his table to our mouths, and be reduced to use our fingers, like Turks and Arabs. And no sooner was this dish placed before us, than the servants, who were now quite as numerous as the guests, fell to instructing and aiding us in the difficult work. The passage, however, of every morsel of meat at the Chinese table, from the plate to the mouth, is on another account a double one; for such is the extreme richness of the dishes, that every piece taken up must be dipped into a cup of vinegar, which is by your side, before it is put into the mouth; and, in truth, we made very little progress in the art of feeding ourselves, for some time. The old adage of "many a slip between the cup and the lip," was never, indeed, better verified; and our efforts and disappointments would have afforded matter without limit for the pencil or pen of a humourist.

At length, after much practice and many doubts whether we should go home with our stomachs empty or full, we contrived to partake of enough to enable us to judge at least of the quality of this first dish, and of the virtue of the Chinese manner of dressing sucking pigs; and on both these accounts we were well satisfied.

Besides the above-mentioned antidote to rich food, there were served also little cups of the brandy of the country, but which we found so fiery, that only sipping it seemed to scald the lips and tongue. Small cups of tea, strong and without milk or sugar, were also served at

short intervals during the repast; and the only want I felt, was of bread, of which there was none of any description, being an article, as I was informed, hardly known to the Chinese of the northern provinces of the empire.

Before we had been long at table, I was happy to find myself seated near a polite gentleman, a Russian subject of one of the German provinces of the empire, and *Otcoopstchik* of the district, Herr Engelhardt, who was residing with his family at Troitskosavsk. He had arrived after we were seated, but he was a guest under the same protection and upon the same terms as myself, and I lost no time in making his acquaintance.

While the feasting was bravely proceeding, after many dishes had been brought in, partaken of, and carried away, my new friend and myself slipped from the table, and went to visit the opposite department of the room, where new dishes were preparing to be served up, and which exhibited by no means the least curious of the scenes of the *surgutchay's* apartment. The profusion and the confusion were here almost equal. There were about a dozen servants occupied in preparing such quantities of meat as would have appeared superabundant, had there been twelve times the number of guests that there were present. I had observed before this, that several dishes that had been brought in, had been carried away untouched; yet the aspect of this department of the room resembled more the beginning than the end of a feast. Among other extravagances, we observed two lambs brought in roasted whole, and set upon trays upon the ground, to be prepared for serving up; and we were told they were brought from the temple where we had seen so many lying upon the slabs the day before. We wondered that they had not been thought too holy to nourish Christians; but this did not seem to be the

opinion of the Chinese. The process of preparing them was to us peculiar and amusing. Several expert hands sat or knelt on either side of each of the trays, and with their fingers, and with the rapidity of thought, and doubtless aided by the ripeness of the meat before cooking, either from the time elapsed since the lambs were killed, or by the frost, tore off all the choicer parts, till what remained of their victim resembled what is left by the locust when a swarm alights upon its vegetable prey, and leaves nothing but stem and stalk and tough fibres behind. Then, with sharp knives they prepared these parts with such art, before placing them upon dishes for the table, that all the morsels into which they were cut seemed of an equal size, and had the same proportion of fat and lean, and yet were smaller than the most delicate among us put into the mouth at one time. After this, the pieces were put, as with those of the roast pig, into vessels containing rich game broth, and thus served.

After we took our seats again at table, dish after dish was still served, even when not a soul continued eating; but of what the greater part of them were composed we were not able to learn. Many of those that we tasted, however, that have been mentioned, we found excellent. A young Siberian, who was among us, said he counted sixty different dishes of the flesh of birds, beasts, and fishes, besides the sweetmeats; and I do not think he exaggerated the number, for they seemed to be countless.

The higher classes of the good people of Pekin, if the dinner of our host were a fair specimen of the dinners at the capital, must be the greatest sensualists in the world. With, doubtless, a great want of intellectual enjoyments, and with no constant source of distraction except the pipe, this is not, indeed, surprising. What the poet, the musician, the orator, and all the

numerous offspring of the Muses, perform for us in Christendom, the cook has perhaps to supply the place of in the Celestial Empire. But I must say I think the skill of the Chinese *artistes*, as far as a judgment may be formed from one feast, is as superior to that of any of our European cooks, unless an exception be made in favour of some of the better sort among the French, as the caterers for our more refined enjoyments, if we may judge from the difference between our music and the *charivaris* with which we were treated upon this occasion, are above those of the Chinese.

It required some patience to sit out the whole time of the dinner. It was disappointing, too, to see no Chinese at table except the *surgutchay*, though, had it been otherwise, any thing like discourse would have been impossible. There was no Russian to be found that could speak a word of the Chinese language; and all that was said by the *surgutchay* was first translated by a Mongol, who understood the Chinese imperfectly, into the commercial language before mentioned, which required yet another translation before it was fully understood by any but the elder residents at Kiachta; and again another, indeed, before myself could comprehend it. It may, therefore, be easily seen how little edifying or impressive was our table discourse to any one present.

But if there was little intellectual intercourse among the party assembled at the famous feast, an endeavour, at least, was made to gratify other senses than those we have seen so well satisfied, by performances of the in the court of the palace upon the instruments above described, accompanied with dancing, but which, in truth, for discord and noise, and for the disgusting character of the dance, exceeded every thing that I have ever at any time witnessed.

Nearly the whole front of the palace upon the court

being, as before stated, of glass, we could see all the antics now performed for our amusement, as well as hear all the noise. The Cossacks that had accompanied us (for there are no Chinese soldiers in Maimatchin) strangely enough kept the court, while the troop of dancers, with instruments in their hands, displayed their antics enclosed between two rows of musicians. It is impossible to imagine any scene more thoroughly revolting, than that which we here witnessed. The war-dance of the savages in America, which, however, I have only seen performed in sport, is the only thing that it appeared to me in the slightest to resemble. But that has its meaning. We can easily understand the relations between violent motion of the body, with distorted features, accompanied by the voice of the wild man, and savage warfare and triumph. But what agreement there could be between the discord of harsh sounds, accompanied by antics such as appeared suited to demons alone, and a joyous welcome to friends, we could not conceive. The latter portion of the dance, indeed, consisted chiefly in the exhibitors leaping and throwing the feet in the air, with contortions of the body such as we could not conceive any men but maniacs performing. But the most disgusting portion of the scene was, the presence of several full-grown men dressed in women's attire, and profusely adorned with flowers, who played the same antics as the rest. In fine, if such be the amusements of the fine folks at Pekin, the Chinese must be barbarians indeed.

It was hardly dark when the *surgutchay* rose from his seat; and as the table broke up, it was announced that the whole party was about to leave the palace to proceed to the temple of the Muses mentioned in the account of yesterday's promenade. Our entrance into the palace upon our arrival, had been sufficiently undignified; but our retirement was a perfect scramble.

The Chief of Maimatchin, with the Russian governor by his side, led the way with a precipitation that excused in others the confusion that followed. Servants were in waiting to hand us our *schoubas*, and every one slipped on his own, as he could find it, and followed the steps of the two governors, who were preceded by the Cossack guard.

Of Herr Engelhardt we saw no more that evening; but his place was supplied by the Russian governor's interpreter, who had now orders to attend upon the foreigners for the rest of the evening, on account of the two chiefs, as he informed us, having found all attempts at conversation ineffectual, and consequently his attendance unnecessary.

It was but a few steps from the court of the palace to the court of the theatre, upon entering which, we found ourselves in the midst of a blaze of coloured lamps, that had been lighted while we were at dinner, and beneath flags of all colours and dimensions, such as have been before mentioned, which were hanging from strings that crossed the court from the roofs of the houses around. We did not stop here to examine any thing; but after passing the passage that we had threaded yesterday, which led to the interior of the open theatre, we found ourselves immediately before the scene.

The theatre of Maimatchin consists of a mere open space, with a stage on one side, and booths upon the other, that might perhaps accommodate about 200 persons. The booths are placed upon either side of the passage at which we entered, and they are reserved for the use of the wealthier classes. The space between these and the stage, which would form our pit, is not accommodated with seats. Before the curtain, which was down when we entered, projected a large portion of the stage in the form of a semicircle, over which

there was a canopy supported by two gilded pillars, which had lamps upon either side, lighting the scene; and two gilded chairs, with a table, were standing in front of the curtain when we took our seats. Upon the whole, the little theatre, as indicative of what might be the state of such branches of the fine arts as are connected with the drama at Pekin, presented on our entering a more cheerful aspect than any thing relating to the intellectual character of the Chinese people, that we had hitherto seen at this cheerless corner of the empire, and filled us with proportionate expectations of the representation that we were about to witness.

The two representatives of the sovereigns of the two empires took their places in one of the booths, and the undistinguished guests seated themselves, some behind the two governors, and some in the booth upon the other hand; but none of the Chinese placed themselves among us.

As soon as we were all seated, the Cossacks who had followed our steps, took their position beneath the booths with their arms in their hands, just in the manner they might have done, had Maimatchin been a Russian village, and the Emperor and his suite seated in front of the booths. The rest of the circle or pit of the theatre was filled with the rabble of the town.

When the curtain was drawn, a fellow in feminine attire, representing a Chinese lady, and another representing a gentleman, entered together, and seated themselves upon the two chairs, and sat for some time without speaking, but at intervals, eyeing each other like lovers during a quarrel. The gentleman wore the ordinary Chinese dress; but the fellow who personified the lady, was richly clad in highly-coloured silks, and wore a head-dress of flowers, and held in his hand a prodigious fan; and he was easily recognised as one of the

dancers we had seen exhibit in the court of the palace.

As soon as the seeming lovers appeared to be tired of ogling each other in silence, they rose from their seats, and a dialogue commenced between them, all the words and expressions of which seemed as if they were formed of three, or at the most four, primary sounds, with certainly, however, considerable variety of intonation. At least, my own, perhaps, not very delicate ear, could distinguish very little more than *Ching Coo Loo.* But the interpreter, whose learning did not indeed go much beyond a fair knowledge of the commercial language, which has but little of the Chinese in it, told us, as it was indeed very easy to guess, that the actors were, a prince in the character of an ardent lover, and a royal coquette.

Whatever might have been the subject of the drama, its representation soon became tedious to us, not more on account of our ignorance of the language, than from the want of spirit and action and change, and the paucity of the actors, with the meanness of the scenery. Some passages of the play, too, were in the highest degree disgusting, from the acting of the fellow who performed the part of the princess, but who bore no resemblance to any thing feminine that nature ever made. To add to this, the thermometer stood at 22 degrees of frost; and although we were all in *schoubas,* we were hardly prepared, even after so sumptuous a dinner, to sit long in the open air. I was not sorry, therefore, when in less than an hour after the time we took our places, the two chiefs arose to depart.

Our guide now informed us that we were to go in procession to visit some of the merchants of the town at their own houses, which the *surgutchay* was accustomed to do upon this the only day in the year on which he

ever honoured any of the subjects of his sovereign that live under his government with a visit.

We came out of the theatre in something more like good order than we had left the palace; and it was now the Russian governor's request, that his foreign charge, with the interpreter, should be near him. After passing through a dense crowd, which had gathered in the courts and in a blaze of coloured light, which paled the "full white moon," to the principal street, we turned into one of the courts before mentioned, and entered the dwelling of the merchant whom the Chief of Maimatchin deigned first to honour. The wealthy trader, after bending one knee, as the *surgutchay* entered, received the two representatives of their sovereigns with dignity in his manner and with but few words. This was now, in fact, the first approach to ceremony which we saw; for, at the dinner of the chief there was really none.

The merchant now led his noblest guest, followed by the Russian governor and about ten others of whom we formed a part, to an ante-room, and, as soon as his servants had disencumbered us of our *schoubas*, to an inner apartment, leaving to some of the Cossacks, who had entered with us full armed, the office of keeping the outer room and the passage to the inner.

The merchant's inner apartment was the type of the miniature town to which his house belonged. All was neat, and all small, with many ornamental, but apparently very few useful objects. At the head of the room, there was a broad divan of the proper height for sitting in European fashion after ascending a step, but in other respects resembling the ordinary divans of the Turks and Arabs, and reaching from wall to wall. In front of this was a table occupying two-thirds of the breadth of the room, and on either side the apartment

there were several other tables and smaller divans and chairs.

All the tables were loaded with sweetmeats, preserved fruits, and choice wines, and with ornamental decorations, far surpassing what were displayed at the *surgutchay's*. The two governors were placed upon the divan in the centre behind the large table, and the interpreter was now placed by the side of the Russian governor, and myself upon the same side. The rest of the foreigners took their places, some upon the opposite side of the divan, in leaving a space between them and the Chinese chief, some nearer us, and the rest upon the benches which were behind the smaller tables. There were no Chinese present, except the chiefly honoured guest, and the host, who modestly took his seat near the interpreter and myself, as soon as the feasting began, and the servants, who were here also as numerous as the guests, and as attentive as those at the palace to the dumb signs that were made to them by our party.

The supper began by the servants from the outer side of the tables, serving us with delicacies upon small plates, and filling and handing across glasses of champagne, which, I was told, was expressly provided for the Russians, known as well here as elsewhere as the greatest bibbers in the world of that choice wine. Not, however, that other wines were scarce. We had, indeed, as it seemed to me, very fair Madeira, though very bad sherry, and port or red wine of some sort much worse.

The guests began to eat and drink almost as soon as seated, and with such earnestness that it seemed as if they had forgotten that they had dined. In the meantime, as the interpreter found his services were not required by the governors, he began to converse with the host; and, as their conversation proceeded, he communicated

to me the substance of what was said. The first portion of the discourse was concerning the quality of the teas produced in the different provinces of China. On this subject the merchant informed us, that the best tea came from Fatscheu, and that of the second quality from Fachan, and also that the teas both of Tchanghay and Nigho were superior to any sent from Canton. Now, if this information, perhaps not wholly disinterested, may be relied upon, it is amply sufficient to account for the unquestionable superiority of the tea drank in Russia over what we drink in Western Europe. It is more probable then, that soil, climate, and possibly different modes of culture and preparation, are the real causes of the difference we perceive, in spite of the prevailing opinion that it is owing to the quality of our tea being deteriorated by the effects of the sea air during the transport, to which that drank in "Russia" is not exposed.

But while we were carrying on this difficult discourse a little inadvertence occurred. The interpreter (for such was his fancy) kept talking continually about the English, which of all things he ought to have avoided, and myself found what passed so amusing, as it was communicated to me, that I could not make up my mind to restrain him. The wars we carried on in China were the subject chiefly dwelt upon. The interpreter pretended that he knew a very little either of the English or of these wars, and the merchant undertook to enlighten him. The English, he said, are a nation without fixed homes, dwelling sometimes in some islands in the ocean and sometimes others. They are in truth mere pirates, continually at war with all other nations.. They come occasionlly on our coast, from which we could very well drive them; but, as we find their sole object is money, and our country is rich and we are disposed to peace, we give them what they de-

mand, and they depart satisfied. But just as this was passing, one of our party, who neither understood a word of the mixed tongue in which it was spoken, nor of that in which the interpreter and myself communicated, contrived nevertheless to betray our little secret concerning myself, by letting the Chinese merchant know that he was entertaining one of the predatory race. I was not, however, aware of this until the interpreter informed me, that upon observing the confusion of the Chinese which it had occasioned, he had flatly contradicted it immediately, and declared that I was an Italian.

But before there was time for any thing further, the two chief guests rose from the divan, and every one did the same, and the feast was over in less than half an hour after it had commenced.

I confess, I was as much disappointed as surprised at this sudden termination of the entertainment; but without reason, as it soon appeared; for we now learned that it was but the first of a series of such suppers, at which we were yet to be the guests.

The Chief of Maimatchin, as he stepped from the divan, expressed to the merchant his satisfaction at the manner in which the honour of his visit had been appreciated; after which the party left the house under the same escort as before.

Of the rest of the entertainments which were given to the same guests at six other houses, whose inhabitants the *surgutchay* thought proper to honour with his presence, it will suffice to say, that they were precisely similar to the first, and that the appetites of the guests generally, which was sufficiently remarkable, did not seem to fall off, nor their relish for the champagne to diminish, during the whole course of this quick succession of Chinese suppers.

As to conversation of any kind, I do not think any

thing was said beyond opinions from time to time expressed by the Siberian party among themselves, concerning the relative claims of the several Chinese merchants to their admiration, on account of the quality of their wines, and the delicacy of their conserves, which were doubtless every where the same.

By the time the *surgutchay* had thus duly honoured all these, the chief merchants of Maimatchin, with his yearly visit, and the merchants had paid all the honours in their power to the representative of their sovereign and his guests, it was about midnight, which is the hour at which the two chiefs were accustomed after their annual meeting, to take leave of each other. And now as soon as we gained the streets after the seventh supper, the *surgutchay*, followed by his placid or grave retinue, took his way to his close home, and our party, escorted by the Cossacks mounted, bade adieu to the narrow streets and artificial lights of Maimatchin, to breathe again in a freer space, and to enjoy the softer light of the satellite whose annual *fête* we had come to aid in honouring.

CHAP. VII.

MAIMATCHIN — *continued.*

Reverse Side of the Picture of Chinese Manners. — The Painter's Account of the Treatment of a Merchant. — Herr Engelhardt's Family. — Intercourse between this Family and the Traveller. — Curiosity of the Ladies about our Queen. — The Knowledge of Britain chiefly from Romances. — Tale recounted to the Traveller by the Ladies. — Adventures of a Chinese Girl. — Inhumanity of the Chinese.

We have hitherto seen this little sample of the Chinese people in their best humour, and their miniature city in its holiday attire; and all has been kindness, hospitality, urbanity. But truth demands, that what has been written should be accompanied by a report of such information as the traveller was able to obtain concerning the lives and manners of this peculiar people.

About this time, a caravan, as we have seen, was arriving by detachments at the border town, and one of the merchants who had accompanied the advanced party, and was deeply interested in the merchandise which it brought, had occasion to transact business with the representative of his Celestial Majesty, whom we have just seen so urbane and so condescending. An interview was sought and granted, and the merchant appeared in the presence. But it unfortunately happened, no doubt owing to the all-engrossing character of the affairs of commerce upon the mind, that instead of bending the knee which the etiquette of the *surgutchay's* court required, he instinctively bent that which he was accustomed to bend first when he mounted his camel.

The error escaped not the eye of the *surgutchay*; and for this offence this merchant was led immediately to the place for the punishment of criminals, and was there made to expiate the crime which, in the eye of the *surgutchay*, he had committed, by receiving 200 blows of the bastinado upon his bare feet.

I have mentioned the disappointment which I experienced at not meeting the gentleman at Kiachta or Troitskosavsk upon whom I had calculated for such aid as is most useful to a foreigner very slightly acquainted with the language of the country in which he is travelling. This was, however, in a great measure compensated by the kind attentions of the governor, and my good fortune in meeting with Herr Engelhardt, the Russo-German gentleman already mentioned in the account of the dinner at Maimatchin. With this gentleman and his amiable family, I spent a portion of the remainder of the time I was at Troitskosavsk. The position and character of this family were such as to excite great interest in a stranger. Herr Engelhardt, unlike the majority of those who enjoy such a lucrative appointment as he held, was living in this remote part of the empire as plainly and unostentaticusly as if he were residing in a country where respect was chiefly ceded to education and character, rather than to the display of riches, too often, in the less happy states of society, the sole mark of merit, and even the sole source of power; or, like a native merchant, whose gains have not yet changed the simplicity of his former life, for the show and extravagances of his countrymen of other avocations, of which we have seen something in other parts of the country. All those indeed whom I had before seen enjoying this appointment were living in such a style, that I expected to find the *otcoopstchik* of Troitskosavsk, the last of all its inhabitants whose acquaintance it might be desirable for

a stranger not in search of the affectation of European refinements to cultivate.

Herr Engelhardt's family consisted of his wife, a lady of elegant manners, with European accomplishments, and three grown-up daughters possessing the delicate beauty of a softer climate, and a mixture of the manners of refined life with the simplicity natural to the rareness of their association with any of their equals. The unreserved intercourse between this family and myself, had just that kind of character that distance and the charge of transport give to the wares that are exchanged between the parts of the globe the most remote from one another. A newspaper very rarely reaches to this distance from the great cities of the civilised world; and the travellers that the Siberians see, are usually of that class which little concern themselves about European affairs. General news was therefore the staple which I had to offer in our intellectual exchange, and accounts of Maimatchin were the chief of the commodities I received in return. While it was my part to speak, the ladies especially were above all things curious about every thing that concerned our fair sovereign. They delighted in contemplating one of their sex reigning over an empire comprising a population of about 150 millions of attached subjects; and they took great interest in such accounts as I was able to give them of our young Queen's family. Scott's novels, through a German translation, embraced nearly all the knowledge of the young ladies concerning our history; and they had imagined our character still little changed from that which belonged to our ancestors in the reign of Elizabeth. I need not state what I told them of my country in relation to our manners, and the prevailing features of our national character at the present day.

The accounts that I received from this excellent family concerning their peculiar neighbours, when it was their turn to speak, were not spare; but I shall confine myself to a single tale, which seems to me to throw more light upon the Chinese character, than any thing I heard that might be comprised in an equal space.

It has been already mentioned in the account of this town, that the inhabitants are all men and boys. No woman and no female child is allowed, indeed, at any time to enter this exclusive society of Pekin merchants and their dependents. But Maimatchin has not always been inhabited by the male sex alone. During the reign of conjugal licence, and, we must needs believe, of greater happiness to the inhabitants than that which they now enjoy, but which terminated some years since, the strictest guard was kept upon the actions of the fair sex in the town, lest any unholy predilection should lead to consequences that might tarnish the pure blood of the Celestial race. I never saw any Chinese women, and I do not admire such pictures as I have seen of the beauties among them. But I am not unacquainted with the impression that the affections of men are apt to receive, when the opportunity occurs, of only beholding, without enjoying the interchange of verbal intercourse with, any of the other sex in a condition that commands in us the passion nearly allied to fancy—human pity; and I should not, therefore, be among those who might censure the precaution on the part of the Chinese, whenever they are the near neighbours of a more manly people than themselves. It happened, however, during the felicitous period in the social history of the people of Maimatchin, that a girl who was of too tender years to excite jealousy, under the influence, as was supposed, of a degree of curiosity, probably rare even among her own

sex in China, strayed away from her home, crossed the neutral ground between the border towns unobserved, and was seen standing alone, regarding the new scenes that the great open place in the Russian town presented to her wondering eyes. It was already late in the evening, when she was discovered by a party of two or three of the Siberians, and there happened to be no other inhabitant of Maimatchin in Kiachta at the time. One addressed her in the Russian tongue, and another spoke a few words of the Mongolian to her, and another tried the mixed tongue; but they all received in reply only a few words in the language that none among them understood. The girl, however, exhibited little or no symptoms of fear, and, when caressed, smiled cheerfully. The novelty of the circumstance soon excited much interest in many of the people of Kiachta, mingled with suspicion that the little stranger had been abandoned by her parents, and put without the gates of the Chinese town to perish. They were prodigal of their kindness to her, and thought of Maimatchin as the last place to which to conduct her. They vied, indeed, with each other, in the pleasure of entertaining her until an opportunity should occur of solving the mystery of her appearance in the Russian town. It happened, however, that a lady near whose dwelling the girl had been found, was attracted to the spot by the gathering which the circumstance had occasioned, and she claimed the right of her sex to be the child's protector, which was readily acknowledged by those who could only oppose the right of discovery and possession. Nevertheless, it was very difficult to know what steps ought to be taken, that might be attended with the least danger to the harmless girl, and the good understanding which existed between the two people; for, danger of some kind and degree they very well knew attended every fresh transaction,

however trivial, between the Chinese and any Europeans whatsoever.

The cause of the girl's appearance, and every thing that concerned her, continued to be mere conjecture. Was she among them, a mere curious spectator of the novelties around her? Or, was she in search of her mother, concealed from her sight for some evil purpose in Maimatchin? Or, was she a fugitive, towards whom it would be to act a most unchristian part, were they to send her back to the place from which she had fled? Grave and tender questions were by turns still put to her, by words and by signs; but they received all the same answer in words incomprehensible to them, accompanied by the most complaisant smile. The girl yielded, however, with artless confidence to the first attempt made by the lady to lead her within the shelter of a Russian house. Upon entering the house she uttered some involuntary expressions which seemed indicative of astonishment; but she continued quite composed, and took some food that was offered to her; and all anxiety concerning her position was soon forgotten in the interest which her novel dress, manners, smiles, and artless confidence, had excited. In fine, the adventures of the little wanderer were terminated for the night by the ladies placing her in a bed in their own apartment, where she slept as soundly and tranquilly as she could have done, had she been by her mother's side.

In the morning when the cherished little stranger awoke, the family with whom she had lodged, nothing diminished in their interest for their charge, began to think it time to give notice to the Russian governor of the presence of a Chinese subject among them; and a party, composed of both sexes, led the girl out to present her at the government-house. They were not, however, above half-way across the broad square, which lay between their abode and the palace, before two

Chinese appeared, who, it was soon evident, were in search of the girl. There was nothing particular about the appearance or manner of these men as they approached, to afford any clue to the still unsolved mystery. The girl, whether they were her kinsmen or not, which was never known, seemed to recognise them as soon as they appeared; and she did not hesitate for a moment to obey what seemed to the Russians present, to be a simple command to her to accompany them.

No objection was made by the protectors of the girl during the past night, to render up their interesting charge, nor were they able to hold a word of conversation with the men who claimed her. They accompanied the Chinese, however, and the little adventurer to the Russian barrier, where they took a feeling leave of the girl, and the two parties separated.

But would that the story could end here! Why our common Creator has made the wide difference between the feelings of his creatures of the same order, which the end of this tale reveals, who is able to tell us? The blood of their race was supposed by the inhabitants of this border town to be contaminated, even by the circumstances above related, and the offence must be avenged before the stain could be expunged. Before the sun set, that was on the meridian when the Russian ladies took leave of their cherished little charge, the innocent girl was decapitated, and her lifeless body cast upon the plain beyond the walls of the town, to be devoured by the wolves.

CHAP. VIII.

RETURN JOURNEY FROM KIACHTA TO SELENGINSK.

Leaving Troitskosavsk.—Reflection on what we had seen.—Quarrel with a *Smotritel.*—Arrangement of the Government to check the Roguery of the *Chinovnik.*—The cold night Promenade.—Beauty of the Night.—Solitude.—Departure.—We again take the Ice.—Arrival at Selenginsk.—Notice of the Town.—Visit to an Exiled Family.—Romantic Spot.—Account of a former English Mission.—Laborious Efforts of the Mission.—Ill-Success of the Mission.—Causes of the Failure.

HAVING now attained the principal object of these travels beyond the Baikal, we set off upon our return to the capital of Eastern Siberia. We commenced our journey as usual at an early hour in the night. The cold, as we left Troitskosavsk, was at 22 degrees; but the atmosphere was still, and the "white moon," now in her third quarter, was rising in a cloudless sky, and every sign was propitious.

As it was the first time that I had returned upon my steps during these travels, there was less to invite attention than on any former occasion. Nobody is unacquainted with that state of mind when the impression of new scenes which we have lately beheld being too strong to permit us to fall soundly asleep at the proper hour of repose, our discursive thoughts present us with images, which we know not whether to attribute to the sober certainty of the waking reason, or to the less restrained faculty ever active within us, "both when we wake and when we sleep."

As the *tarantass* proceeded, and there was nothing

heard but the trampling of the horses, and now and then a monotonous note from the *yemstchik*, my thoughts returned to Maimatchin, and, in a kind of traveller's *résumé*, presented all we had seen during our intercourse with its peculiar population. We seemed to be again promenading through the silent streets amidst their gaudy decorations and depressing silence, and to dine again with the representative of the sovereign of the "Celestial Empire," to visit the temples, to attend the theatre, and to sup again in the houses of the seven merchants in the good company of the same exalted personage as before. But while these images were succeeding one another in the mind of one at least of the travellers, amid reflections concerning the degree of human degradation to which the millions that this little town represented are subjected, we were suddenly aroused by the oft-heard cry, "*Niet locarde*" (No horses).

We had arrived at the post station-house at Oustkiachtinskaia, where we were once more received with those well-known words. The letter of the governor at Irkoutsk, which had wrought miracles on a former occasion, was new presented; but this time it produced no effect. The *smotritel* informed us, that every horse in the village had been attached to a caravan on its route to Kiachta, which had left the station about an hour before our arrival. But as we had met nothing on our way, we were doubtful of the truth of his report, and determined, at least, to note the circumstance in the manner which the law affords the traveller the opportunity of doing.

The means, indeed, which are provided for obtaining redress, on account of any injury that one may suffer by detention or ill-usage of any kind at the stations, is, as far as the intention of the law goes, excellent; but it is seldom resorted to, on account of the

delay and inconvenience attending the administration of the law, which are incident to a country where the distances between the towns honoured by the residence of persons in authority are so great. At each of the stations, a book is kept chained to the table, for the express purpose of the traveller registering such grievances as he may think he has suffered; and we now demanded pen and ink, for the purpose of setting down the complaints for which we took it for granted that we had just cause. But when the *smotritel*, who seemed at first to have no dread of our proceeding, was informed that the complaints were to be written in a language which he did not understand, his alarm became so great, lest we should do him some wrong, that he took possession of the materials for writing, and it was only by taking the pen and ink from him by force, that we were able to effect our purpose. I wrote down, however, merely the hour at which we arrived, and the answer we had received to our application for horses, and this in English, which it was not likely would soon be interpreted.

We then removed our effects into the *sani* which we had left here on our way to Kiachta; and as I was the best clothed of the two, I determined, for their security, to sleep in my place, just as if we were continuing the journey: and so went quietly to bed in the midst of my furs.

The thermometer at the time we had left Troitskosavsk, was at 22 degrees of cold, and was probably now about 26 degrees. But I had slept in the open air uninjured when it was much lower, and I expected even a more agreeable night than I was accustomed to enjoy when we were travelling. I was, however, mistaken in this; and I had very soon the proof how much more the cold is felt when we are at perfect rest, than when in motion, even without personal exertion; and I found it now too great to admit of risking sound

slumber, where there might happen nothing to break it; and, being unwilling to enter the house again after our disagreement with the *smotritel*, I took my gun and ammunition, and set off upon an excursion about the precincts of the village by the bright light of the waning "white moon," armed rather against the chance of meeting wolves, than in search of any thing, whether harmless or ferocious, to destroy.

It might be difficult to convey a fair idea of the calm interest attending a night tour alone, amid the silent wastes of a gloomy region, like that in which we were now travelling, which must proceed rather from the absence of objects calculated to produce impressions, than from such scenes as the daylight exhibits and our senses recognise.

The air was at rest, the earth was colourless, and no sound indicated the presence of any thing that had life or motion. What should a traveller attempt to extract from such absolute nothingness around him, that might be transferred to the mind of another? Yet may moments like these be among the most memorable of those he will experience. Tired of looking on vacancy, his eyes instinctively turn upwards, and his thoughts follow them; and how shall he escape the impressions which the firmament, amidst the solitude of a Siberian night, must ever impart?

In the morning we were furnished with horses; and with our winter vehicle, we descended to the river, and were soon once more at full speed upon the smooth surface of the Selenga. And as we experienced no further impediment to our journey, we arrived at Selenginsk soon after dark upon the same evening.

I had been furnished by a lady at Irkoutsk with a letter to an exiled family residing in this vicinity; and, as this is the centre of the Bouriat country, of the inhabitants of which I wished to see more than the

neighbourhood of Irkoutsk afforded the opportunity for, I had determined to make as long a stay here as might be necessary for that purpose. We drove, therefore, directly to the house of the chief of the police, to endeavour to obtain his aid to procure quarters.

We found this officer at home: and he was no sooner acquainted with our wants, than he politely gave us a letter to one of the wealthier inhabitants of the place, containing an order to the party to provide us with a proper apartment. We had, however, four more versts to drive upon the river, before we attained our appointed lodgings, owing to the town being in the condition of undergoing a change of site, by which it at present consists of two distinct parts. The more ancient part, where we were to lodge, though not low, stands upon a point of land which exposes it to the danger (to which it has been several times subjected) of being carried away by the spring floods and the masses of ice which sweep down the river at that season. This division of the town, nevertheless, still comprises the largest number of houses and the chief part of the population. We counted eighty houses during our stay here, which had the appearance of being inhabited: in the midst of which, however, there were many tenantless buildings, in ruins or rapidly falling to decay. The ancient church, being of wood, and left without the frequent repairs which buildings of that material require, was fast decaying, and presented a miserable object of neglect. We heard that the inhabitants of this portion of the town amounted to about 400, but that those of the new portion did not exceed 100, who were chiefly indeed composed of *chinovnik*, for whom there are several government offices. There were, however, two merchants among them, by whom both the town and the vicinity were supplied with such European goods as the inhabitants were able to consume.

Upon inquiring of the good people on whom we were quartered, we learned that the family to whom the letter above mentioned was addressed, resided at the distance of four versts below this part of the town, upon the banks of the river. In the morning, therefore, I sent the Swiss with the letter, and a message to say that I would wait upon them, if convenient, at a later hour in the day. But I received a note in return from one of the gentlemen of the family, to say, that the lady to whom the letter was more especially addressed, was lying dangerously ill, and that the situation of the family was consequently such as to render it impossible for them to receive my visit.

This was a great disappointment to me, not less on account of what I had heard of the amiability of the family, than for the want I should find of the information I had calculated upon obtaining from them, to facilitate my attainment of the objects of an excursion that I had determined upon making while in this vicinity, for the purpose of visiting the *Khomba Lama* or great high-priest of the people in whose proper country we were now travelling, and who are of the Buddhist religion. The Swiss, however, brought information, that the family occupied one of two houses that had been built for two English missionaries, who, after having subsequently been long occupied in endeavouring to convert the Bouriats to Christianity, had been withdrawn, and that the other was tenanted by an old Dutch exiled naval commander and his family, one of the ladies of which spoke the French language. I did not, therefore, hesitate in determining to pay this family a visit.

The spot which these two families had chosen, or which had been appointed for their dwelling, is one of the most romantic in this part of Siberia. The river as we approached the site upon which the two houses stand,

in turning to the left, seemed to terminate in a basin. The houses are situated upon the opposite bank of the river to that upon which the town of Selenginsk is seated; and they stand upon the edge of a narrow inclined plain, sinking from the abrupt base of steep and rugged hills, and immediately in front of a bold range of other hills, which rise upon the opposite side of the stream, and present more vegetation than the greater part of the hilly portions of the banks of the Selenga.

We found the ancient Dutch commander and his family at home; and, after a polite reception, I received from the ladies among them in particular, a variety of useful information concerning my projected visit to the *Khomba Lama*, and also an account of the result of the labours of the missionaries above mentioned.

The exiles informed me that the mission had indeed been wholly unsuccessful. This result, however, of the enterprise, and of much labour and zeal, they were convinced was by no means to be attributed to want either of zeal or capability on the part of the missionaries, whose literary labours and whose success in this respect had been wonderful. They had acquired the Russian, Mantchou, and Mongolian tongues, the last of which is spoken by the Bouriats, and all at the same time; and they had not only formed a grammar, and originated and completed a dictionary of the Mongolian tongue, but they had also made a translation of the Bible into that language, the merit of which was attested by the Russian priests of the country who were perfectly familiar with the language of the people. But notwithstanding all their labours, not a single Bouriat had been converted by them, although there were a few who, for worldly gain, pretended to embrace Christianity.

"The mission," said the lady who was my principal informant, and whose words I shall as nearly as possible

repeat, "only failed, because the undertaking was beyond the power of man to accomplish, unaided by more than his own genius. The missionaries had all the zeal and perseverance of the apostles, but they wanted their power of working miracles, or the aid of some such startling circumstances as the history of religious revolutions has often presented to us, and without which, all efforts at all times to convert the Bouriats will be equally fruitless."

CHAP. IX.

VISIT TO SOUGGIRA, THE CAPITAL VILLAGE OF THE BOURIATS, AND SEAT OF THE BUDDHIST RELIGION IN SIBERIA.

The Bouriats.—Their Settlement.—Population.—Commencement of the Journey.—Anticipations.—Advice to very dull Travellers.—Folly of being too incredulous.—Belief of the Bouriats.—Buddhism.—Lamas.—Lamaseries.—*Khomba*, or Great Lama.—Mysteries of the Religion.—Immortality of the *Khomba Lamas*.—Transmigration of Souls.—Passage of a Range of Hills.—Paucity of Snow.—Fine Views.—Descent of the Hills.—The Lake Gvosimeer.—Passage of the Lake.—Arrival at the Village of Souggira.—Sensation among the Lamas.—Reception.—The Lamasery.—Alight at the Dwelling of the *Khomba Lama*.—Ceremonious Reception at the Palace by two inferior Lamas.—Pious Awe of our *Yemstchik*.—Discourse with these Lamas.—Interview with the *Khomba Lama*.—Hideous Features and Deformity of the *Khomba Lama*.—Awkward Position.—Description of the Apartment.—Respect paid the *Khomba Lama*.—A new Interpreter.—Discourse.—Impressions received.—Curiosity about the British Sovereign.—Unprofitable Character of the Discourse.—Impressions left.—A Wigwam in the Court.

At Selenginsk we were in the midst of the Bouriats of Siberia, the chief strength of whose race is in Mongolia, within the boundaries of the Chinese empire, and the seat of whose religion, which is Buddhism, is at Llassa, the capital of Tibet. Their settlements extend far into the Russian territory, and they compose nearly the whole of the population of the country which lies south and south-east of the Lake Baikal, their numbers, as stated by their lamas or priests, amounting to about 200,000 souls.

Upon the second morning after our arrival at Selenginsk, at an early hour, we commenced our contemplated journey to the Bouriat village of *Souggira*, the name of which signifies in the language of the country, *behind the Lake*, which agrees, as we shall see, with the position of the place. But before entering upon an account of this journey, which will embrace a visit to the *Khomba Lama*, or Great High Priest of the Bouriats, who resides at this their chief village in Siberia, and some account of the temples and the forms of worship which are peculiar to the Buddhist religion, it will be as well to state the impressions under which the travellers set out upon this expedition.

I do not envy the enjoyments, nor covet the reputation of those who will for ever submit every object they survey, and every impression they receive, to the often inconvenient ordeal of their severest judgment. Were the earth of a rectangular figure, were we able to frame a poem by diagrams, and were a curve line and a figure of speech unknown, our understandings might be with advantage exclusively consulted concerning all we hear and all we see; but we might then expect to find little beauty to contemplate, and few tales of interest to listen to, throughout the longest pilgrimage by land or by water. Since Nature, however, has filled the world, both moral and physical, with beauty, variety, motion, and change, when we travel in lands that are new to us, wherefore should we not look upon their varied surface, and the still more varied character of their inhabitants and of the institutions under which they live, just as they are, or as they seem to be, to those who know no other, instead of deadening our interest and wasting our time in indulging in vain regrets that they are not what we would wish them to be? But perhaps we ought, above all, to regard with respect the opinions of all weak mortals possessing a common nature

with ourselves, concerning, in particular, the great First Cause before whom all nations and people bend the knee, and in some form or other adore.

If a traveller, indeed, should set out upon a journey for the very purpose of reforming and reducing every thing he may meet with to his own standard of excellence or perfection, his case might be peculiar, and such as we have nothing to do with, and have nothing to object to. But those who travel to see what the world realiy is, rather than for the purpose of making it better, may find an advantage in not too constantly appealing to their sober reason to form a judgment concerning what they behold. The voice of the stranger, that proclaims to assembled multitudes who may be under any spell whatsoever, that all they believe, and all they witness and deem sacred is unworthy their regard, will never be heard. Let us then, on this occasion, fortify ourselves against the manifest error of disputing with the doctors in the temple of their own faith.

At the time of the ancient moralists, men already complained of the too short span of life, to admit of our accomplishing any thing important in which we engage.

"Vitæ summa brevis spem nos vetat inchoare longam."

Nor have the greatest moralists among the moderns been less disposed to complain of this condition upon which we enjoy existence,

"Our life can little else supply,
But just to look about us and to die."

The mortal portion of our two-fold nature begins to decline in activity and strength, before the spirit has ceased to cultivate and improve the attributes which are peculiarly its own.

I did not think when I entered Siberia, that I should

in the course of these travels, have the good fortune to see and converse with a being deemed by men like ourselves to be immortal, or rather, as we trust that we are all immortal, with one whose spirit is believed to have existed for centuries, and to be doomed never to quit this world, to enter into that we know not of, or in other words, never, to all further uses here, really to die. Ghosts have been described "shrieking on the wind" by night, or "folded in the vapours of a fenny field," or "harrowing up the souls" of men upon the eve of battle. But we were now on our journey, to see and converse, as we trusted, in plain day, with one who, since an infinity of years past, has, in the opinions of myriads of our fellow-men, walked the earth, and taught by day and slept like all good people by night.

The simple Bouriats, in common with the whole human race, bow down before some being by whose power they suppose they exist, and whose beneficence they acknowledge. Like other races of men, they have also their peculiar faith in certain communications from the Deity to their forefathers, consisting of mysteries mingled with some moral precepts, and accompanied with rules for the observance of religious rites; and their lamas or priests teach the one and perform the other.

At the capital of Tibet dwells the head of their religion, the *Dalai Lama*, whose soul is believed to be an immediate emanation from the essence of their supreme deity Buddha, and to enjoy immortality. Throughout Tartary, Mongolia, and Tibet, and in a part of China, and also of Siberia, and wherever the worship of Buddha prevails, there are towns and villages that are wholly of a religious character. They consist for the most part of temples dedicated to the worship of Buddha, and a lamasery, containing from 300 or 400, up to 15,000, and even 20,000 lamas of the several

orders known among them. Over every lamasery presides a chief, who is believed to enjoy the same immortality as the grand head of their religion at Llassa; and the chief of the lamasery at the holy village of Souggira is the head of all the Buddhists of Siberia, and is called by the Bouriats the *Khomba*, or *Grand* Lama.

Here we must, however, remark, that not more than among any other people, is flesh and blood believed by the Buddhists to be immortal. Thus, as with the bodies of other men, they inter that of their *Khomba Lama* who seems to die, but in the firm assurance that the spirit still lives, very soon to recover from some temporary inconvenience incident to a change it undergoes, again to preside over them in a fresh and new body. At the instant, indeed, according to their faith, that the spirit of the *Khomba Lama* quits its habitation in one body, it enters into another, which becomes its successor to all the rights and privileges of the head of the lamasery over which its predecessor reigned.

The spirit of the *Khomba Lama* is bound by no known laws in its transmigration, but seems to enter into whatever body it will. On this account some difficulty occasionally arises in the discovery of the body into which it has newly entered. The search, however, being among the duties which fall to the priests to perform, always terminates successfully. The surviving spirit is found by some infallible marks known to the priests alone, and most commonly in the body of an infant newly born, which is now taken to the palace of its predecessor and brought up and educated in all the mysteries of the faith. But sometimes it happens, that the spirit of the ever-living lama is found to have taken possession of a grown-up body, the accommodating spirit of which enters the body of some infant just about to be born. In this case, as

is at all times found among the sacerdotal orders of the people, the new *Khomba Lama* enters at once upon the performance of all the functions of his office, which he continues to administer until this habitation is worn out and dies also, and so on, until the end of time.

After passing the new town of Selenginsk, we left the river, and ascended some gentle slopes, which form the base of a ridge of high hills, that run nearly north and south, and divide the River Selenga from the Lake Goosimeer, which lay directly in our path, and which it was necessary to cross to attain the object of our journey. The country was here totally destitute of trees or shrubs; but the ground seemed to be entirely covered with the remains of a wild coarse grass which the paucity of the snow left often visible, and which sometimes obstructed our accustomed rapid pace. There was neither road nor track of any kind; and we had been four hours upon our journey, without observing the sign of the existence of any population when we attained the summit of this range of hills. We had now before us a more extensive and more picturesque view than any I had seen since descending the mountains that divide Europe from Asia. The nearer objects of the vast landscape were some inferior hills beneath us, which formed great steps in the descent to the lake above mentioned. The surface of the lake presented at this distance a mottled appearance. Upon the opposite shores appeared a varied country of white hills and vales, which the sun, still low in the heavens behind us, exhibited in as many shades and forms as it might have presented, if vegetation had covered all the inequalities of the ground; but towards the north, the lake was seen stretching out beyond the compass of the view.

We halted here for a few minutes to enjoy the exciting prospect. There were no habitations visible

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from this altitude. But we had not proceeded far in our descent, before our *yemstchik*, who was a Bouriat, pointed out to us the sacred village in which the *Khomba Lama* of his race resided, which was seen now like a small dark spot of ground that was difficult to distinguish amidst the wild wastes, and at the foot of other hills upon the opposite side of the lake.

As we continued to descend the trackless way, we had upon our left hand sometimes valleys and sometimes deep ravines, by the precipices of which the skilful Bouriat conducted us with a confidence that admitted no doubts of his knowledge of the country; and upon our right we had varied slopes and inferior hills. But we were generally able to keep at full gallop during the descent, until we gained the banks of the lake.

We now took the ice near the southern extremity of this noble sheet of water, which, from the time we were crossing, we judged to be about twelve versts in breadth, and I subsequently learned that it extends from the place at which we crossed it, in the northerly direction, to a distance of about twenty-two versts.

The Lake Goosimeer differs as much from the Baikal in the character of the scenery that surrounds it, as in the extent of its waters. In place of the view which the traveller obtains from the surface of the Baikal, of grand, rugged, steep, dark, and irregular mountains, sometimes spotted with fir-trees, from the surface of the Goosimeer, at this season, we see on all sides the white hills of a snow-clad but gently waving country, without a spot upon any of its declivities to indicate the existence of the most spare vegetation.

We found the mottled appearance of the surface of the lake which we had observed from the hills, to be caused by patches of snow at regular distances with black ice intervening. The snow in some places, indeed,

was deep; but we had three fine horses and a light *sani*, and we arrived while it was yet early in the day, at the opposite banks of the lake, where we were now within three versts of the holy village.

We had learned before our departure from Selenginsk, that a long time had passed since the last European visited the Siberian *Khomba Lama*, and we were consequently prepared for our appearance causing some little sensation among the inhabitants of the holy place. We were not likely therefore to be frightened out of our propriety by any attentions or honours we might chance to receive on the occasion.

As we approached the village, and whilst yet upon the open ground, we perceived (for the houses were wide apart and not placed to form streets) just such a stir among the people as a bird's-eye view of the interior of a fortified town might discover, when the enemy was advancing unexpectedly to storm it. Some were seen running in one direction, and some in another; and the greater part of those who seemed in the most haste, were dressed in flowing red robes. But as we drove up in an open place which seemed near the centre of the village, we were met by fifty or sixty men, besides some women, and some children of both sexes. Several of the men were dressed in the ordinary costume of the Bouriat peasants, but the greater part in the red robe. They all took off their caps to salute us as we pulled up, but it was difficult to say whether their countenances expressed most curiosity or welcome. We chose, however, to consider our reception as a hearty welcome, and after acknowledging their salutation by also uncovering, we made a few necessary inquiries.

Our Bouriat *yemstchik*, who had been selected to conduct us by the *Gorodnichii* of Selenginsk, on account of his being able to speak a little of the Russian language, which the obliging official thought might enable

us to make some use of him as an interpreter, in case we should find no better on our arrival at Souggira, although he had, we were quite sure, been in the holy village of his race before, seemed not to know whereabout the *Khomba Lama* dwelt. This appeared to us rather strange, until our introduction to the holy man, when it was explained, as we shall presently see. However, we no sooner made known to those around us to whom our visit was intended, than several of them offered their services at once to bring us to the dwelling of their religious chief.

The proper lamasery here comprises the grand temple in which the principal idol of the Buddhists, or the representative of their supreme deity, sits with some attendant deities, to receive the adoration and prayers of his worshippers, and several smaller temples, and the *Khomba Lama's* dwelling, all of which are entirely surrounded by pallisades.

The proper front of the *Khomba Lama's* dwelling faces the lake, and has a spacious court before it, the great gates of which open upon the plain between the village and the lake.

At these gates we now drew up. We found here a numerous troop of the sacred order, in their red robes, already in attendance to receive us. But while we were disencumbering ourselves of our sledge-coverings, and alighting, which is not like jumping from a summer carriage, several of those who came to receive us were earnest in their inquiries of the *yemstchik* who the strangers were, to which our conductor replied, as he had been especially instructed, "a foreigner and his interpreter with the Russians, come from a far country, and who, while travelling in this part of Siberia, would not willingly omit paying a complimentary visit to the chief among its aboriginal inhabitants."

This appeared quite enough; and the priests or lamas

of the inferior grade, now formed a complete procession, in the midst of which they placed the strangers, and our Bouriat conductor and interpreter behind us; and in this order, we passed across a broad space between the walls of the great enclosure and the front of the *Khomba Lama's* dwelling.

As we approached the building, two unrobed attendants first mounted some steps which led to the entrance; and, as they now stood, each with the half of a double door in hand, the holy men who were before us in the procession formed a double line, through which we passed till we gained the door. All this was not, however, done without some confusion and scrambling, which doubtless proceeded from the want of practice in the ceremonies of receiving strangers of the importance which, it was already pretty clear, they had determined upon considering us to be.

We now gained the disrobing hall, as we will call the anteroom, which is between the doors that open upon the court and the inhabited apartments, still attended by a part of the persons of the procession. Here the two unrobed attendants performed the same duty as the Russian servants are wont to perform for strangers, in disembarrassing us of our furs before we entered the apartments within. This performed, which is not the work of a mere moment with a winter traveller in Siberia, we were led to another apartment, at the upper end of which sat two lamas, in Eastern fashion, upon a carpet spread upon the ground, with each a large book under his left arm. One of them was extremely fat, and rather tall; and, as I had heard a report of the uncommon corporeal dimensions of the *Khomba Lama*, I concluded we were in his presence; and as they rose I made the Mussulman salaam, which the position of the lamas at the moment put into my head, by placing my right hand upon my breast, and afterwards upon my

forehead, which natural expression of feeling doubtless cannot, whether it be the custom or not with those among whom we travel, be easily misunderstood.

There was nothing here that seemed in any way commensurate with the ceremony with which we had been conducted thus far. The apartment was without any furniture, except the carpets upon which the lamas had been sitting, and a framed piece of writing hanging against one of the walls, and two chairs of European form. The lamas, now, by significant actions, which did not require that some words that accompanied them should be understood, insisted upon my being seated, while they themselves stood. Notwithstanding the sacred presence in which I thought we were, after a little hesitation, I felt compelled to yield, instead of bowing and scraping like a man of the city, and making excuses in a language which would not be understood, trusting to some quick explanation through our native interpreter. But upon turning to the Swiss, who was under better discipline at present than upon a former occasion, and was still standing, to desire him to make through our *yemstchik* some complimentary communication, I found we had lost our interpreter upon the way from the *sani*. The Bouriat's knowledge of the Russian tongue, indeed, was not very great; yet it had been calculated upon, and we had no one at hand to supply his place. I sent the Swiss, of course, immediately in search of him; and thus I found myself alone with the lamas, without the power of uttering an intelligible word, or perhaps of making a sign that might be understood. There did not, indeed, seem to be much disposition on the part of the holy men to talk, and I kept my seat, as we thus gazed at each other in silence, while about a dozen of the inferior lamas stood within and without the door, equally silent, and with countenances as serious as if the most important affairs were

about to be transacted. Our position was doubtless equally painful, and it endured too long. My two interpreters, however, at length made their appearance, and things took their natural course. But as it proved that it was alarm excited by excess of respect for the lamas on the part of our Bouriat interpreter that had caused him to absent himself, and the man was brought in as unwillingly as a criminal led to punishment, there was little to be expected from his aid.

The lamas now put the first question, which was the most natural one possible, inquiring the object of my visit; and the same answer was returned as that which had been before given to the inferior lamas. But we very soon found by what followed, that we were not yet in the presence of the *Khomba Lama* himself, but in that only of lamas of one of the several inferior grades of the order. It was now, also, equally apparent, that this interview was merely for the purpose of ascertaining truly the rank of their visitor, in order probably to enable the *Khomba Lama* to settle the ceremony of the introduction to his especial presence. A variety of questions, indeed, were asked, with evidently the same design, and during which especial allusions were made to commerce, until the answers seemed to satisfy these lamas that their visitor was not of the commercial order in his own country, which appeared to be conclusive that I must be of high rank, or I could neither have business, nor be permitted to travel, in another.

After the conversation, which seemed to end in these conclusions, a very little more discourse passed, before some disorder was perceived at the door of the apartment; and upon making inquiry, we found that a messenger was already on his way from the presence of the *Khomba Lama*, with some message for the strangers in his dwelling. Another minute, and the messenger entered; and it was communicated to us, that we were

invited to enter the especial apartment of their chief. The two inferior lamas with whom we had been conversing, now led the way, and we were soon in the sacred presence.

As we entered by a side door near one end of the apartment, the great oracle of the land, robed in crimson, appeared at the opposite end, seated upon a low divan, and attended on either side by several of his inferiors, and in front by others, who sat on the ground beneath him, while some were seated at eight or ten yards further removed around him. He rose as we entered, and the rest did the same; and we were now led to a short bench, covered with red cloth, near this end of the chamber, which brought us immediately opposite the sacred person and his peculiar retinue.

Nothing that I had heard of the *Khomba Lama's* dimensions had been exaggerated. I never before saw so monstrous a specimen of humanity. We have had our fat parsons, and many nations have had their fatter still. But the *Khomba Lama*, although, as I learned afterwards, only thirty-three years of age, was at once the tallest, the stoutest, and the fattest, and at the same time the most deformed in feature, of all men I ever beheld. Yet in spite of this latter defect, which seemed rather the consequence of his fatness than nature's original blemish, there was evidently a predominance of benevolence in his expression, which made his countenance even agreeable when he spoke.

The *Khomba Lama* made a sign that I should be seated, which I obeyed, as he seated himself, and the Swiss continued standing by my side. But when the moment seemed arrived for some mutual interchange of thought, we found our Bouriat had again deserted us, not having been able, as it appeared, to gain courage to stand in the dread presence of the *Khomba Lama*, notwithstanding some efforts that had been made to

strengthen his confidence, as we afterwards heard, by the lamas, with whom we had the first interview, after they had witnessed the poor man's confusion.

The Swiss now went once more in search of the lost man, and I was again left as before; and as some time elapsed before the recovery of the only means of intercourse with the lamas which it was possible to obtain, it afforded me the opportunity of making a leisure survey of this especial apartment of the Grand Lama.

The side upon the right, and opposite the door at which we had entered, seemed to be sacred to religious purposes. A portion of the apartment was here railed in, and contained numerous statues, which were seated in the Eastern fashion, amidst gaudy appendages to the rites of the worship they doubtless enjoy, consisting, it appeared, chiefly of artificial flowers and shrubs. There were also radiant suns or stars, whether mere ornaments or emblems of objects of worship, our limited means of intercourse did not afterwards afford us an opportunity of ascertaining. The rest of the apartment was sufficiently in keeping with the more brilliant and more sacred portion. But the living scene was the most striking to the stranger. The lamas, grouped around their chief, presented the most picturesque appearance imaginable. I observed, also, at this moment, what I had not noticed before, that all, except the chief, were barefoot. But the fact of the exception, coupled with the circumstance that we had no hint given us to cast off our shoes, seemed conclusive, that the mark of respect on the part of the inferior lamas was for the *Khomba Lama*, and not towards the worthy deities in whose presence we seemed to sit.

The Swiss at length arrived a second time with his captive, and he again took his station by my side, and the desired intercourse seemed ready to commence. We were not yet so far advanced, however;

for our simple interpreter was now so overawed in the presence of the immortal chief of his religion, and trembled and stuttered in such a manner when he attempted to speak, that he was wholly unable to utter intelligibly a single word of a short speech that he was desired to convey to the ear of the *Khomba Lama*, as a commencement of our anticipated discourse.

I never before saw man so awed by man. Fortunately, however, our new embarrassment was not of long duration; for, from among the crowd about the door, a more confident Bouriat, who had also more of the Russian tongue than our *yemstchik*, stepped forward and offered his services, and the discourse now properly began.

Rejoiced at our new position, I did not wait for any question from the *Khomba Lama*, but desired that he might be in the first instance told, that the fame of his patriarchal care of so many subjects of a sovereign in alliance with my own sovereign, had induced me to pay him a complimentary visit.

This was of course spoken to the Swiss, who repeated it in the Russian tongue to our new interpreter, through whom it reached the ear of the *Khomba Lama*, most certainly without any curtailment in the number of the words, but how correctly or incorrectly we could not of course form any idea. When the *Khomba Lama* seemed, however, to understand what was said, he in return expressed his gratification, as it reached my ear through the same channel of interpretation, at seeing and conversing with a foreigner, and the subject of a sovereign in alliance with the great emperor; and he desired, at the same time, that I might be asked the name of my country, and its distance from Siberia.

The questions with which this communication from the *Khomba Lama* concluded, were of course, as plainly answered as possible; and it seemed that the answers

were the more intelligible to the holy man, on account of the English name having reached his ears in connection with that of the Chinese. It might have been supposed, indeed, at this step in our discourse, that it was only in company with that of his near neighbours that he had ever heard it pronounced, and then only in reports that had been brought by Bouriats who had heard from the merchants who visit Kiachta of the late wars between the Chinese and the English. Nevertheless, though this communication conveyed this impression, we had reason to believe, as the discourse advanced, that what had been said proceeded from the desire on the part of the *Khomba Lama* that he might rather be supposed to entertain within the chambers of his palace an enemy to the Chinese than an enemy to his spiritual dominion, which it was quite natural that he should deem the countryman of the missionaries above mentioned.

The *Khomba Lama* seemed, indeed, to think, as the difficult discourse advanced, that we were the near neighbours of the "Celestials." But when he was informed of the actual distance between England and China, and in addition to this, that the two people had no intercourse with each other by a nearer route than a four or five months' voyage, he expressed himself unable to understand what cause of war could arise between two nations at such an immense distance from each other.

The subject of the discourse now changed, by the *Khomba Lama* asking some questions about our sovereign; and, after he had heard that the British sovereign was of the gentler sex, he caused several questions to be put, which all seemed to proceed from a desire to know the means by which our government was carried on. To these I replied in such a manner as I thought might be most easily comprehended by one who it was impossible should understand the simplest

elements of a government that is an enigma and a mystery to every nation that is not the offspring of the same mother of liberty, order, and equal laws. I informed him merely, that the whole people among us, through their representatives, elective and hereditary, made the laws, and that the sovereign, with the aid of councillors, interpreted their intent, and enforced obedience to them. To this he seemed to have nothing to remark, save to express his surprise that a woman, and so young, should reign over a country that could make war upon the great Chinese empire.

I was unwilling to ask any question that might seem to indicate too great curiosity concerning the religion of the Bouriats, lest it should awaken any sleeping prejudice that might be entertained by the *Khomba Lama* against the English, on account of the mission just alluded to, or cause suspicion that I might be the secret agent of others who had some recondite design upon his spiritual dominion. The subject, however, came up; and as I could, as it proceeded, discover no such feeling lurking beneath the kindly expressions that reached my ear, I gladly took the opportunity afforded me, during our discourse, of expressing even an unfavourable opinion of that mission, both because I sincerely entertained it, for reasons I will afterwards state, and because I believed that this would lead him to make some observations upon this subject, which I should like to hear. I was willing, however, to let the lama lead the discourse, if he would; and he now caused me to be asked, whether we had a Grand Lama to preside over all spiritual affairs, like the spiritual sovereign of the faithful of his religion, who resided at the holy city of Llassa.

To this question I replied, that our temporal sovereign and our *Khomba Lama*, which were one and the same person, answered in some measure to the great spiritual head of his religion, within the proper country

of Tibet; but that the British *Khomba Lama* might more appropriately be compared to the temporal sovereign of all his own fellow-subjects, as both these European sovereigns were temporal heads of the entire nations which they governed, and spiritual heads of the more important portion of them. I added, however, that our *Khomba Lama* was not much troubled with the details of spiritual matters, having, like his own great chief, as well as the Russian Sovereign, plenty of willing aids in the labour.

There were many questions and answers passed after this. But if the answers to questions put by the *Khomba Lama* reached the holy man's ear in intelligible language, but few at least of those that I received in reply to questions which I caused to be put to him, came to me with this advantage. One other, however, of the questions at least which he put, reached my ear in such concise and particularly clear language, that it is probable the reply to it did not suffer much change in its transmission. The question was perhaps an indirect allusion to the English mission, of which I was anxious to hear his opinion. He requested that he might be informed, whether I was acquainted with the opinions of the Grand Lama of my country concerning himself and his people. And in reply to this, I caused him to be told, that I had not been fortunate enough to hear any thing of our sovereign's opinion upon this subject; but that this was no proof that himself and his people might not be very well known to the British Queen, and be even especial objects of her interest. This seemed, in whatever dress it may indeed have reached the *Khomba Lama's* ear, as if it caused some degree of disappointment. But lest the reputation of the British sovereign for just tolerance should suffer in his opinion, I thought it proper here to inform him that our *Khomba Lama* had under her

government, men of more religious faiths than even the great Russian Lama and Emperor, and, what I thought would interest him most, that she had a greater number of subjects of his own faith by many millions, than the great Emperor of the West had, and that she distributed equal justice towards all of them, though many in her distant dominions were of creeds far indeed less like her own than that of the people over whom he presided.

Some short communications that came to me after this, left an impression on my mind, that it was the opinion of the *Khomba Lama* that all religions were good, when the men themselves were virtuous. From this I was led to believe that he considered them all to be but mere engines of government, or that there were two or more creators and superintendents of divided portions of the universe, who were independent in their actions, and had severally formed different races of men, from whom they exacted their particular dues in especial forms of worship which they had arranged to suit their particular tastes.

And now, as I thought the *Khomba Lama's* patience might be a little strained, I requested that I might have permission to see the principal temple of the lamasery, which was with evident willingness immediately given. So taking leave, for the present, of the immortal Buddhist, we proceeded, with our last enlisted interpreter, accompanied by three or four of the inferior lamas, to inspect the sacred edifice.

Upon descending to the court which we had crossed before entering the dwelling of the *Khomba Lama*, we observed a wigwam of large dimensions, which had before escaped our notice; and upon inquiry we found that it was the summer residence of the *Khomba Lama*, and that it was inhabited by him at that season, for the purpose of preserving a due respect among his people

for their ancient usages, which, in their modes of life, had been much changed since they became a part of the Russian people. The wigwam was formed of felt, and was about seven feet high, and without any aperture apparent at the top, and very plain without. We entered it for a moment, and found the interior handsomely decorated in a similar style to, but with more simplicity than, the apartment of the *Khomba Lama* in which we had just had our interview.

CHAP. X.

VISIT TO SOUGGIRA—*continued.*

The Buddhist Religion.—Origin of Buddhism.—Brahmins.—Manifestations of the Supreme Deity.—Reviviscence of the Lamas.—Proper Creed of the Buddhist.—Corruptions introduced by the Priests.—Moral Tendency of the Belief in Transmigration of Souls.—Mythology of Buddhism.—Allegories.—Purity of the Moral Code.—The Religion adapted to the Genius of the People.—Compared to Mohammedanism.—No Hell.—Effects of their Religion on the Characters of Men.—Humanity.—Occupation of the Lamas.—Frugality of the Lamas.—Severity of the Rules.—Reasons against the Use of Tobacco.—Temples of the Lamasery.—Interior of the chief Temple.—Worship of the Lamas.—Hymns.—Music.—Decorations of the Temple.—Instruments.—The Idol Jugamonane.—Examination of the Symbols of Worship.—Sacred Writings within the Temple.—Character of the Worship.—Opinion concerning idolatrous Worship generally.—Impressions of Virtue and Vice among Men in a rude State of Society.—New Regulation of Missionary Labours important.—Suggestions for other Means of introducing Civilisation.—Advantage to be taken of our Knowledge of the Occupations of the Lamas.—Obstacles surmountable.—Impolicy of overthrowing established Institutions before others can be substituted.—Taking leave of the Lama.—Return to Selenginsk.

BEFORE we enter the principal temple of the Buddhists in Siberia, it will be as well to recur to such few points of this remarkable religion as are best known beyond the circle of those initiated in its mysteries, and acquainted with its secret history. The dullest of mortal men could not enter one of the temples of this great religious community, and remain wholly indifferent concerning the origin and character of the rites of worship herein performed. The origin, indeed, of

Buddhism does not seem to be with certainty determined by the learned men either of the East or the West. Nevertheless, the concurrent traditions among the more enlightened of the Buddhist communities, seem to fix the date of its commencement at about the year 1010 before the Christian era, and to agree that its founder was the son of Suddodana, King of Mogdha, in South Behar and Maija. That it first arose in India, little doubt can be entertained, from the circumstance that all the Buddhists, in whatever countries they are found, agree in regarding the Sanscrit, which is the sacred language of the Brahmins and the root of the numerous tongues now spoken in India, to be that in which their religion was first promulgated. To the proper Hindoos, therefore, we should first turn, to see how their accounts in general agree with those entertained by the Buddhists themselves throughout the vast countries and provinces in which they are found.

The supreme deity of the Hindoos, whom we must first mention, following the religious history of that people, appears to be identified in the unity of three not very concordant intelligences, by mysteries which, though inexplicable to our understandings, are doubtless, like all the apparent obscurities in the religions of semi-barbarous people, perfectly intelligible to those who perform the rites that belong to them. The worthy triad consists of Brahma, the Creator, Vishnou, the Preserver, and Siva, the Destroyer of the universe, which, when all united, form Brahme, their supreme *Numen*. Now Vishnou, it is said, took upon himself the likeness of humanity, and appeared in the person of Buddha, said by the Buddhists to have been of the royal line above mentioned, and seduced millions of the faithful, who formerly acknowledged the triad, to the worship of his own particular person. His followers were, however, persecuted by the true

Brahmins, who drove the greater part of them out of India, by which their religion became spread through the vast countries where it now prevails.

The institution of the grand head of the religion, the *Dalai Lama* of Llassa in Tibet, appears to have originated in the credit acquired by a series of saintly persons, the last of whom was called Takyasinka, which indeed is he whose reviviscence from time to time has continued the line down to the present day. In the meantime, it is not deemed any inconsistency that this spiritual essence should inhabit several bodies, even in several countries, simultaneously. Not only, therefore, does the second Lama in rank, who is called Boucnan, but also all the vicegerents of these two great lamas, who are settled in various countries, enjoy this advantage. These are properly called Koutonktous, and the *Khomba Lama*, from whose presence we have just retired, is one of them.

Whatever may have been the origin, and whatever may be at this time the true character of Buddhism, it is certain that it is now spread over a populous and vast tract of country in China Proper, Tibet, and Mongolia; and it is probable that it is professed by a greater number of the human race than any other religion that exists in the world.* In its proper constitution it proclaims one Supreme Being possessed of many attributes, who may be represented in a great variety of forms. Man it declares to be an accountable being, who will live in a state hereafter in which his condition will be commensurate with the good or evil that was predominant in his character, during his existence on

* Hassell's estimate of the numbers of the professors of the several most widely-spread religions of the world, is as follows:— 120,000,000 of Christians, including all sects; 4,000,000 Jews; 252,000,000 Mahommedans; 111,000,000 Brahmins; 315,000,000 Buddhists.

earth. Its written precepts for the guide of life are known to be highly moral and consonant to reason. But, just as happens in many other religions of the world, that which seems to have been calculated to produce the most refined state of society, has been so corrupted, that in most of the countries in which it prevails, it probably now retains but an inconsiderable portion of its original and proper character. The priests, by arts common to their order in all countries, in a dark age, have contrived to fill the whole system with metaphysical subtleties and incomprehensible mysteries, of which they alone are the interpreters. By this means they have obtained the credit for infallibility, and a consequent power, not only in spiritual but also in temporal affairs, which has led to the introduction of institutions, and even articles of faith, which have much changed the character of the religion, and checked its better influence upon the life and manners of the millions who profess it at this day.

One of the most remarkable, but at the same time perhaps harmless, if not even highly moral in its tendency, among the tenets of this religion, as it exists at the present day, is the doctrine of the transmigration of the vital essence of all creatures. The spirit of every animate being is believed to be an emanation from the essence of Buddha, which submits to a variety of transformations, until it attains the perfection of its nature through some appointed means, when it is reunited without losing its individuality with the eternal and universal essence from which it proceeded.

The moral tendency of this article of the Buddhist faith is most manifest from the incentive to a virtuous life of which it is found to be productive; for it is the great aim of every reflecting Buddhist to escape further transmigration, and to attain at the end of this life the final object of his existence.

The mythology, also, which belongs to the religion, is said to be full of allegories of a very moral cast, mingled with the wildest dreams and grossest absurdities. Nevertheless, all the rites and offices by which it is characterised, are known to be free from the sanguinary and impure observances of several of the religions of Asia, as well as from the worship of the ferocious and obscene deities which is common to many.

The proper moral code of the Buddhists inculcates, indeed, a life of peace and purity, such as no men of any age or country or religion have ever attained. But if we were to point to any one virtue by which this religion is characterised and distinguished above any other with which it can be classed or compared, we should dwell upon the known practical humanity which it has engendered, by which the lives of its adherents have been regulated, and their manners abundantly modified. But if it were necessary to go further and ask, whence this relief, which seems to shine like a glimmering light amidst a labyrinth of darkness, we should say that it can proceed from none other than a happy circumstance in their faith, which has tended, by the cheerful prospect of futurity which it affords, to impress an image of the supreme Deity upon their minds, of which this is the natural result. Let us, for the sake of seeing more clearly this particular phase of the religion, compare, in this one instance, the impressions which its adherents imbibe, with those entertained by the Moslems, who are by no means without the same virtue which we seem to find predominant among the Buddhists.

According to the faith of the Buddhists, at the final consummation of all the works of the Deity, man, his greatest work, will have attained the ultimate end of his existence, and the perfection of his nature, and will

dwell now for ever in a state of happiness and repose. According to the Moslem, at the day of final account, those who have been virtuous in this life are introduced into a new paradise where every sensual enjoyment awaits them; but, the far greater portion of the human race find abodes prepared for their habitation, where they will have "garments of fire fitted unto them," and where they will burn in unquenchable fire for ever. Now, if the religion of Asia in which the least superstition is found, and which is even based upon that of Europe and of civilised man, can present such a picture of the end of our species, and of the final consummation of the works of the Creator, can we wonder, when we see the contrast in that which we are contemplating, or doubt whence proceeds the remarkable relief which we have seen amidst its many errors and superstitions? No such place exists in the creation of Buddha as that which disfigures the religion of the Mahommedans, and adds to the attributes of the Omnipotent the worst of the passions of men with their evil consequences reflected upon human character. In a word, this religion seems to be in almost every respect, the best that has ever been invented by man, and has remained unmixed with Judaism and Christianity.

The priests or lamas of the Buddhists are very numerous. But the sacerdotal order in general, and the institutions which regulate their lives, are not among the best features of this religion. In particular districts they are congregated, as before mentioned, in religious houses or lamaseries, where prayer is their chief occupation, much in the same manner as in Christian countries still possessing the mediæval religious institutions which even Romish Spain, however ignorant and demoralised may be her clergy, has set them the example of abolishing. There are also to be found in some parts of those countries where the Buddhist

religion is predominant, certain lamas who retire to caverns in the heights of the mountains or in the deepest ravines, where they devote their lives to contemplation, and practise much the same severities that were formerly so common among Christians.

Nevertheless, the organisation of the system of the Buddhists is in many respects adapted to the genius, and agreeable to the wants, of the people in the state of society in which the Bouriats are found. The lamas in the direction of their studies, and in relation to their avocations, are divided into four classes or sections. Those of the first are chiefly occupied with the study of doctrinal affairs, and with the abstruse tenets and mysteries of their faith, which are at any rate sufficiently deep and intricate to secure those who engage in the study of them from *ennui*. Those of the second are occupied with the regulations and conduct of all that concerns the rites and ceremonies of their religion. Those of the third occupy themselves in the study and direction of their worship. But it is those of the fourth section that are the most calculated to excite our interest. Not only do they by their pursuits best supply the immediate wants of society, but they seem even, as we shall presently endeavour to show, to hold in their hands the very key of the gate at which the genius of civilisation, in a different form from that in which she has been hitherto presented to the Eastern nations, may find her ultimate entrance into Asia. Their occupation is the study and practice of medicine; and they are said to consult all such medical books as the libraries of China and Tibet afford. Moreover, those who reside in Siberia are known to practise very successfully, but more especially during any times of alarm proceeding from the dread or the prevalence of epidemic diseases.

Neither are the ordinary employments of the industrious class among all men in a state of society considered above

the dignity of the lamas; and many of them occupy themselves in the various branches of industry, but more particularly in the manufacture of their own wearing apparel, and the furniture and other necessaries for the use of the lamasery.

The rules of the lamasery are very strict concerning the regulations of the table, and the habits of life of the lamas. The use of spirits is strictly forbidden them, lest excess, as it is declared, should disorder the brain of the student of the divine oracles, and corrupt the heart by the bad passions which it might engender. The use of tobacco is also denied them, and certainly for the very best of reasons that have ever been given against the practice of smoking: because, they say, it is conducive to indolence, and tends to waste the hours which we are able to spare from the serious occupations of life, which ought by every rational being to be devoted to some pursuit which affords as well instruction as amusement. The celibacy of the sacerdotal order is also partially enjoined.

The chief temple of the lamasery of Souggira is placed in the centre of the upper side of a great square within the enclosure before mentioned, opposed to the plain exterior of the back of the *Khomba Lama's* dwelling. It resembles exteriorly a one-story pagoda, and is made the more imposing by the two sides of the square being formed by eight or ten smaller temples of similar construction placed at equal distances from one another. All the temples have raised colonnades around them, with flights of steps leading to their entrances. The grand temple has in front of it two flights of steps covered by a verandah, and an ample estrade before the principal entrance.

As we appeared at this entrance, one of our red-robed attendants opened a little door in a pair of folding gates, through which we now entered the building,

where we found ourselves at once in the midst of one of the most striking and imposing scenes that may be any where beheld; and not more so from its novelty, than from the imposing effect of several hundreds of the red-robed children of the faith seated amidst the gay and grave symbols of their religion, and engaged in the solemn rites of adoration and prayer.

The interior of the temple is wholly seen at one view. Upon either side, in positions nearer to the centre of the building than to the side walls, slight columns support the roof. A shallow recess appears in each of these walls, at equal distances from either end; and there is a receding from the right line of the wall at the end opposed to that at which we entered, similar to what is commonly seen in our Christian edifices. From the roof above the nave, and from cords which passed across the centre from the capitals of the columns on one side, to those on the other, and from the cornices, in the same manner, hung countless ornaments, consisting chiefly of flags, pendants, and artificial flowers. The spaces between the line of the columns and the side walls were filled with benches rising one above another: and these, as we entered, were crowded with lamas in their red robes, seated in the Eastern attitude with their faces towards the nave of the edifice: and before the front row were suspended various instruments of music, among which the Chinese gong was the most conspicuous. But after contemplating this dazzling show for a short time, our eyes rested upon the plain object of the adoration of the lamas, seated amidst the parade of worship, in calm repose, in the centre of the recess at the extremity of the building.

The interpreter now desired that we would advance directly up the decorated nave. Fearful, however, of disturbing the devotions of the worshippers, I requested that he would lead us round by the walls. But the

motive for the request being apparent to the Bouriat, he assured us that our appearance would have no such effect, and that there existed no reason why we should not advance directly up the centre; and as he led the way, we followed.

All was yet silent, and I confess, that the solemn act of adoration which we now witnessed, unaccompanied by the least sound or motion, had already excited my sympathies and deepest interest. But, as in creeping our way, we had very nearly arrived at the upper end of the nave, the lamas, as if our presence had suddenly touched some string that awakened them from their state of mute contemplation, commenced a hymn, accompanied by several wind-instruments, which produced an entrancing effect. Presently, however, the gong, tambourine, and other noisy instruments suspended from the roof, were beaten by some half-dozen of the lamas on either side, in harmony nevertheless with the vocal and less noisy instrumental sounds. And such an uproar as now ensued, I confess I never before heard in conjunction with harmony. Nay, if ever molten image or matter formed by the hand of man into an object of worship be made to hear, the Bouriats cannot fail to make their placid deity at Souggira at least sensible of their adorations.

We inquired what was the character of, and proper incentive to, this worship at this time, and were answered, that the worshippers asked a blessing upon all their undertakings, health to themselves and their cattle, and the perpetual aid of Jugamonane, the particular personification of the deity that presided in their temple.

We now arrived near the recess in which Jugamonane sat amidst the same alternate silence and loud bursts of music and song. Two lamas of superior order sat on either side the recess with their faces turned towards the

body of the temple; and inferior deities on both sides supported the great Jugamonane as he sat unmoved amidst the din, the seeming auditor and spectator of the pomp and circumstance of his worship. These superior lamas held in the hand each a tambourine, about which hung objects which, when the frame was shaken, performed the office of the hand in our larger instruments of the same kind. They at least a little aided the effects of the noise.

No one interfered with us, while we examined all the immediate symbolical objects, and inferior deities which are placed about their calm superior. But while we were contemplating the still repose of the seated Jugamonane, and were thoughtful and giddy amidst the exhibition, and almost expecting to see the idol nod assent to the loud petitions of our fellow-men, our guide bade me touch the image, which we could just reach. When I observed the little reverence which he seemed to have for this deity, I was under the impression that he must be a Christian. This, however, was not the case; and, upon a second invitation, I placed my hand upon the knee of the idol, merely out of curiosity to discover the cause of the invitation so to do, when I perceived by the countenances of the two lamas that were with us, that the act rather pleased than shocked them.

The temple is not without its sacred writings, also. We did not see any books; but we possibly overlooked some, perhaps confounded with the showy objects that surrounded the idol. But upon making the tour of the building, we found in the side recesses above mentioned, large framed manuscript writings suspended from the walls, some of which appeared old, and others new. These, the guide informed us, consisted of passages from their sacred writings in the Sanscrit tongue.

Before we came out of the temple, I caused several questions to be put to our intelligent guide and inter-

preter, calculated to discover, if it were possible, the true character of the idolatrous worship which we appeared to see; and what we heard from him, and all we saw, left on my mind the impression, that the adoration performed by these lamas, whatever may be done in other countries, approached no nearer to direct idolatry than the belief, that the statue in the presence of which they bowed, in representing or standing more properly in the place of, the Supreme Deity, gave them more lively impressions of his attributes and his perfections than they were able abstractedly or without such aid to entertain.

"Buddha," said indeed our informant, very plainly, "delights to be adored in a visible form, and Jugamonane is one of the personifications in which he is most pleased to be represented, because he is herein figured especially as the patron of benevolence and all the calmer virtues." It was impossible to believe that the orisons of these lamas were mingled with any thing that indicated that they believed that matter which themselves had moulded into form, could will, or do them either evil or good.

The fervour and emotion which accompany the petitions and adorations of those who bend the knee with grateful hearts before Him to whom they owe their being, or from whom they hope to obtain forgiveness for their offences, it is well known, in particular instances even among some sects of our own religion, lead at least to a temporary belief that the figure which the hands of men have formed, and to which the power of the chisel or the pencil has given the close semblance of intelligence, is conscious of their good or evil actions, and is able to reward or punish them at pleasure. But this seems to me little more than our impressions when we read poetry and romance. Who is there in whom the passion of terror has been excited by the scenes which

exhibit the fallen angels cast into the abyss of liquid fire, and end with the recovery of Satan from his first stupor, that has not seemed to hear the very sound of the voice that

> " Called so loud, that all the hollow deep
> Of hell resounded?"

And yet we no sooner desist from indulging in the contemplation of the images of the poet's imagination, than a higher faculty of the mind than that which we have been exercising, tells us that what we have for a season believed is not real. Let us at least hope that none of our species, however rude, are without a consciousness superior to what might indeed give us strange ideas of so large a portion of mankind.

It is worthy of remark, that among men in the most primitive condition, and amidst the rudest conceptions of the Deity, we find many moral feelings and impressions of virtue and vice, more in accordance with what we know to be true and most acceptable to the Creator, than we find generally among men in the intermediate stages between that of the savage, and that of man in the state of society that we usually call civilised. Thus it becomes of importance to discover, whether there are any means of giving men in the condition of the Bouriats any other religious knowledge, than that which they possess, without rendering the latter portion of their original impressions less distinct, and destroying the very foundation upon which their moral conduct and all their obligations to society rest.

Wherever men, indeed, are found almost without social institutions, and with the grossest impression conceivable concerning the Deity, no doubt can be entertained of the obligation or of the success of missionary labours. And in all such cases, the simple method of the Moravians, which embraces chiefly the moral of

religion and its history, and which has been so successful with the Negroes in our West India colonies, might perhaps be the speediest and surest means to the end that none can deny to be most desirable to attain.

It appears to me, however, in relation to Central Asia, that there is a more certain means than the labours of missionaries, for the introduction of the religion of civilised man even into the heart of the country; and this means is, the promulgation of a knowledge of the most useful arts of civilised life, together with the elements of natural science.

These very words indeed thus employed may seem like empty sounds. But let us suppose, that even the missionaries above spoken of, as soon as they had completed the grammars and dictionaries of the Mongolian tongue, had begun to teach their scholars the means of acquiring knowledge — that is, writing, reading, and the use of figures — and that they had followed this up by the elements of such knowledge as tends most to benefit the condition, or excite the curiosity of men. We have seen how even the lamas are occupied, and that their sacred duties do not prevent them following the ordinary avocations of the industrious classes among all men in a state of society. And does not this circumstance suggest to every one who considers it, that a door here stands wide open for introducing into the villages of the lamaseries men acquainted with the arts best adapted to civilise and refine the people, even throughout the vast Buddhist empire?

The jealousy of the sacerdotal order, naturally the strongest obstacle to vanquish in all attempts to introduce a new religion among any people whatsoever, would not be excited by measures taken to accomplish this object, or would cede to their material interests. What obstacle, for instance, can it be supposed would be put in the

way of the agriculturist who would double the crops of the land? What opposition can we anticipate would be offered to the introduction of gardening, as one of the fine, as well as useful arts? And above all, in what corner under heaven has the art of medicine found any opposition to its introduction, save when it has been in the hands of men who have degraded their profession by suffering avarice to predominate over every other passion they possess? Men who should carry these immediately apparent boons with them, and among whom would appear none of those disputes and denial of each other which are found among missionaries of opposite sects, could not fail to gain a degree of respect and obtain an ascendency that would throw education completely into their hands, and thus pave the way for the promulgation of the religion which the missionaries whose feelings are ever too strongly engaged in the prime object of their mission to act with coolness and deliberation, may never accomplish. The produce of the labours of the excellent men above mentioned is probably already placed upon the shelves of the British Museum among the curiosities of literature.

It was because I entertained these opinions, that I did not hesitate to express to the *Khomba Lama* an unfavourable opinion of the English mission.

I am quite aware that Chinese jealousy would be the great stumbling-block in the way of men engaged in any mission of this or any kind, in any part of Asia, in the remotest degree connected with China. But the Buddhists that we have seen, are in no way subject to the authority or influence of the Chinese, and there are many Buddhist nations equally independent of that peculiar people. We are only speaking, too, of a first step in a new career of adventure: the means and the moment for proceeding further would belong to the mission to discover.

It is my confirmed persuasion, that missions to countries where any religion is firmly established that is founded upon ancient scriptures which have maintained their credit, have contributed more to delay than advance the Christian cause. They have often excited the jealousy of the governing authorities, and thus acted, indeed, as a direct bar to such intercourse, at least, as we have supposed to be that alone adapted to civilise and Christianise the various races throughout the vast countries of Asia in particular. If the progress of Christianity were traced through the different countries in which it has been taught, beginning at Jerusalem, in company with the character of the efforts which have been made for its establishment, perhaps the above remarks would appear sufficiently well founded to excite an interest with some who might be powerful enough to effect such a change in the whole missionary system as would tend more speedily than we dare hope, to rescue a vast proportion of the human race from the state of degradation in which they are at present plunged.*

From the temple we returned to the palace, to take leave of the immortal lama. I now expressed to the holy man my great satisfaction at all we had seen, and at the consideration with which I had been treated. The *Khomba Lama* smiled benevolently as this communication was made to him. After this, in the same ceremonious manner in which our previous conversation

* Some years since, when the writer of these Travels was in Syria, a missionary presented him with a little book he had published entitled, "The Offices of the Holy Ghost; an Exposition of the Symbol, Water:" but the contents of which, he has to regret, he could not understand. Need any comment be made upon the means this good man had taken to convert the Mohammedans and Jews for whose instruction it was circulated?

had been carried on, he bade us a prosperous journey, and, last of all, requested that when I should see our English Grand Lama, I would present his best wishes for her happiness and the continued favour of her God.

I thanked him on behalf of my fellow-subjects, as well as on my own account, for his good wishes concerning our Sovereign; and I assured him, that should the British Queen at any time visit Siberia, I was confident she would pay him a visit; and moreover, I added, that in case of such a remarkable event, I was equally certain that our Queen would receive as much pleasure as himself from the interview.

We left Souggira immediately after this leave-taking on our return to Selenginsk. We reached the opposite side of the lake before the day closed. After re-ascending the hills we had before passed over, and during the first hours of the night before the moon rose, we had the opportunity of observing a remarkable exhibition of the Aurora Borealis. The whole of the northern hemisphere first appeared tinged with a deep dull light, similar in colour to red-hot iron shortly after it has been taken from the fire. This, however, soon spread in rays of brighter colour, which seemed to dart like sunbeams across the zenith, until the entire heavens, from the horizon on one side to that on the other, was covered with these beams of light in rapid and continual motion and change of shade and colour, of which I know nothing in nature that might afford a simile to convey any just idea We arrived at our quarters at Selenginsk early on the following morning.

I cannot close this account of the Bouriats without mentioning, that before quitting the place, upon calling on the *gorodnichii*, to thank this obliging officer for his attentions during our stay in the capital of his district, I had the gratification of hearing from him a very favourable report concerning the morals and the

conduct generally of the people of this race within his jurisdiction.

We obtained some further information before leaving Selenginsk, concerning the inhabitants of the wide territory on this side the Baikal. We were informed that a people called the Soiyots, inhabit a district lying south-west of the great lake, within the boundary of Siberia, and that two other tribes inhabit the country south-west of the same lake, one of which was called the Narragassin, and the other the Goosimeer, after which the lake near Souggira has doubtless been named. These tribes have very little commerce with either the Russians or the Chinese. Little indeed seemed to be known concerning them, save that they lived entirely by hunting, and that they were without any thing worthy the name of religious or social institutions.

CHAP XI.

RETURN JOURNEY FROM SELENGINSK TO IRKOUTSK.

Departure from Selenginsk.—Inebriety of the Bouriat *Yemstchik*.—Detention.—Overthrow among the Ice.—Remedies for Inebricty.—*Yemstchik's* Face scalded by the Frost.—Reach Verchneoudinsk.—Second Passage of the Lake Baikal.—Curious Phenomenon in the Elongation of the Vision.—Views on Shore on approaching the Land.—Reach the N.W. Shore.—Tempest during our Coasting Journey.—Rest at a Station on the Coast.—Reach the Entrance of the Angara.—Appearance of the Rapids.—Superstitions of the Bouriats.—Arrival at Irkoutsk.

We left Selenginsk again, upon the morning of the day after that of our return from Souggira, on our direct way back to the capital of Eastern Siberia. We had now no moon during the first hours of the night; but the ice upon the river was smooth, and the light of the stars, which shone with their usual brilliancy, was sufficient, with the instinct of our cattle, to enable us to keep our wonted pace till our arrival at the first station.

Between the first and second station, when we had fortunately the light of the waning "white moon," in addition to that of the stars, we experienced some inconvenience and delay through the inebriety of our *yemstchik*. The house at the station where we had taken this fellow up, was full of Bouriats, all rioting in the full effects of the precious *vodka*, and not a sober man was to be found. It was highly important, however, that we should proceed; for we had so timed our departure from Selenginsk, that one night's delay would cause us

to reach the Baikal at an hour that would involve the loss of another. It is not prudent to launch upon the broad waters of that grand lake for a certain period of five hours, and perhaps seven or eight, after the day is too far spent to admit of completing the passage or getting a good sight of the opposite coast before dark; and, as every moment we delayed, unless we remained the night, confirmed more and more the condition of these desert rioters, we picked out the man that seemed to have the most reason remaining, and determined to make the best we could of him. We made a verst or two without any inconvenience; and although the ice now upon both sides of our track, was broken into masses that were lying about like loose granite rocks and stones, of all forms and all sizes under that of a haycock, there was no doubt of the ability of the horses to find their own way. But here our *yemstchik* began to nap, and pulling the reins as he nodded, he drew the more intelligent animals than himself off the track; and before either of the passengers had time to get possession of the reins, we were overthrown and tossed out, and our beds with us, among the masses of ice, amid which the horses had been driven. The only damage, however, was to the *sani*, and this was slight. But the accident might have caused us much more inconvenience than this, had not the drunken *yemstchik*, in spite of his condition, retained possession of the reins. And it is due to these companions of the traveller in Siberia to say, that this duty is generally performed so faithfully by them, that instances have been known where they have been dragged by their horses for several versts, at the risk of life, and during which they have received severe bodily injury, and yet have still retained hold of the reins, and saved the lives of those who have been so shut up in the *sani* as to have no means of escape. More contented, therefore, upon this

occasion, with our escape with sound limbs, than out of humour with our conductor, and believing the adventure had partly restored him to sobriety, we collected all our articles that lay strewed about upon the ice, and, when we had found the track, set off again at the usual speed.

We were deceived, however, with regard to the condition of our *yemstchik*, and, our position considered, I thought the circumstances justified the trial of a remedy for inebriety in usage in the country. I now watched the *yemstchik*, and every time he nodded, I rose up, and effectually roused him, not with a continental slap, but an English good thumping. It was to little purpose, however; for it was nothing but nodding and thumping, and going more or less off the track at every doze, and back again at every thump; so that it was plain, that without a better remedy, we should soon get another upset. Thus I now determined to try one I had found very effectual with a stubborn horse, by whose laziness I was once exposed to the danger of passing the night in the Canadian forest, without the provision against cold in use in Siberia. This had been substituting for the ineffectual whip, a spruce tree almost large enough for a shallop's mast, which I now resolved to use instead of the double fist; and having stopped where the bank of the river promised to supply our wants, a suitable tree was soon found, and as soon as cut down, and a little thinned of its superfluous foliage, we set it upright between us, at the same time warning the *yemstchik*, that it would fall upon his head every time he nodded or went off the track.

We went on very well after this for about half an hour, when we found it necessary to resort to the use of the tree, by the effects of the repeated blows from which we reached the next station without further accident.

Upon alighting here, however, we found the *yemstchik* had his face terribly burned with the frost, and his feet in a condition that made it plain that our spruce tree had saved him from losing them. I must not forget, however, to add, that he was not ungrateful for the service that we had rendered him in keeping him awake; and he thanked us very heartily for the beatings he had received, as soon as a cup or two of tea had sufficiently sobered him to admit of his being sensible of the obligations we had laid him under.

The next day before noon we reached Verchneoudinsk, where we left the river: and on the following evening, without further accident, we arrived again at the banks of the famous Baikal.

Our second passage across the great lake was as fortunate as the first. The day was as brilliant as those that had preceded it; and we had now the opportunity of witnessing a remarkable phenomenon, as it appeared to us, of which it is necessary to make particular mention.

As we launched upon the smooth surface of the ice, which was in the same condition as when we made the previous passage of the lake, the coast upon the opposite side was so distinctly visible, that we were under the apprehension that our *yemstchik* had changed our route, and that we were merely crossing an arm of the lake; and I could not be convinced of the contrary, until I had alighted, after we were two or three versts from the shore, and got out our compass and chart, and compared the bearings of the promontories of land within view.

It is impossible to exaggerate, in speaking of thi phenomenon. When we were scarce a verst from the land, having the sun at our backs, we were able to see the mountains upon the opposite coast, and the scanty dress in which nature has clothed them, as distinctly as

if we had not been five versts from their base, although we were near sixty. Instead of seeing only a faint blue shade, such as the French coast assumes, viewed from Dover Cliff, which is then at little more than a third of this distance from us, and where nothing is distinct but the outline against the lighter colour of the sky, we could here, not only distinguish the shades that marked the form of the mountains, caused by the valleys and inequalities of the ground, but even the dark firs, as they singly stood wide apart, and spotted the whole surface of the snow-clad sides of the hills towards the lake.

I got out of the *sani* several times, indeed, for the purpose of making more free observations, and confirming the reality of what we appeared to see. And were it not for the time we took in crossing, which was five hours, travelling at full speed, I could not have believed that there was any proportion between the calculation and the reality in respect to the distance. There was, indeed, but little difference in the appearance of the hills, and the vegetation which clothed them, whether they were seen from the distance of nearly sixty, or of half-a-dozen, versts from their base.

Whether this elongation of the view to such a wonderful degree beyond the ordinary powers of vision, proceeded from the rarefaction of the air by the cold, or from some magnifying power caused by any relation between the line of the visual ray and that of the smooth substance over which it passed, or were the result of both these causes, or of some other, it was to myself, though before familiar with ice and snow and sledge travelling in countries hardly inferior to this in the rarity of the air and the grandeur of their natural features, as new as it was unaccountable.

Nothing obstructed our smooth way during the whole passage of the lake. As we approached the shore, our attention was attracted, by the similitude we perceived

between the appearance of the visible objects on the coast, and those we see when we are approaching the land on ship-board. This was particularly remarkable as the buildings at the post station on shore rose gradually above the line of the horizon, from the time we perceived their roofs, until we reached the shore.

It will be remembered that the traveller has two stages of coasting to perform before reaching the Angara, by the entrance of which we come upon the road across the remaining country to Irkoutsk. We had of course breakfasted before we took the ice, and had, therefore, nothing to detain us longer at the station at which we landed, than was necessary to imbibe the proper quantity of heat for the next stage.

The weather had been perfectly calm during the first hours of our passage of the great lake. The wind, however, began to blow before we had made half our crossing; but as its course was directly that which we were pursuing, it caused us no inconvenience, save such as arose from the augmentation of cold.

When we came out of the perfect oven in which we had rejoiced for about an hour, we found little apparent change in the weather; and we descended to the ice, where we had left our *sani*, and the horses being already attached, we commenced our coasting journey without any further delay.

The shores of the lake are unequal, and so indented with bays, separated by promontories, that the traveller is sometimes six or seven versts from the shore during his journey. While we were in this position, we experienced one of those violent and short-enduring storms which have been mentioned among the phenomena which characterise this remarkable inland sea, and which often expose travellers, both in summer and winter, to imminent peril. As we were crossing one of the deep indents, with the wind directly at our backs,

we observed several loaded *sani*, that had been approaching us, and were at the distance of about two versts, suddenly turn and commence the trot which the smooth ice permitted before the gale, and, upon putting our heads beyond the hood that sheltered us, we discerned the cause. Within a verst or two in our rear, a perfect tempest appeared already raging. It seemed as if a volcano had suddenly burst the ice and divided the waters, and was throwing up its fire and smoke together into the air. Clouds of fine snow seemed whirling round a centre, or rushing against each other, like the vapours in the air during a rotatory storm; while the rays of the sun, by the inequality of the objects upon which they fell, produced all the appearance that the imagination may picture of the bursting out of a mighty volcano.

The enjoyment of the scene which was here presented to us, was not qualified by any such apprehension of danger as we might have experienced at a greater distance from the shore; and we now took the bearings by our compass of the promontory ahead, that we might know our course, after we should, as we could not fail to do in a few minutes, lose sight of the land. The snow at first drifted by us like dust over the surface of the ground, but soon reached us in a solid cloud, driven by the wind with such violence, that it was with difficulty we could keep our *sani* from swinging round, and perhaps throwing the horses. We contrived, however, to scud before the irresistible elements for about an hour, when we made with great nicety the promontory, beyond which our next station lay; and now, better sheltered by the land as we proceeded, we soon got snugly housed for the remainder of the time that the bad weather might continue.

The storm was of about two hours' duration; so that the day was too far spent when it abated to admit of

our accomplishing our object if we continued our journey, of passing the entrance of the Angara by day; we therefore stretched ourselves upon the benches at this station, to rest quietly until the morning.

With the return of daylight, we again took our seats in the *sani*, the motion of which we had seemed rather to miss than otherwise during the night. The atmosphere had now resumed its perfect serenity; and by the time we attained the entrance of the Angara, the sun had again dressed the mighty lake and the high and rugged hills around, in all their native magnificence; and we could not avoid feeling regret that we were leaving the scenes that we now a second time contemplated with the gratification that ever attends the view of the ruder and grander features of nature, wherever we behold them.

It has been before said, that the Angara forms the sole outlet for the waters of all the rivers that fall into the Baikal around the coasts of the lake on all sides, and that this river alone conducts the cold waters of the remarkable inland sea to the great river of Siberia, the noble Yenessei, which falls into the Arctic Ocean. As to the sources of the Angara, although one of the lesser streams that flows into the lake near its north-eastern extremity, is called the upper Angara, its real sources consist of a thousand streams, of which none has a superior claim, except the Selenga, which is the largest of them all.

On either side the broad sluice, or rapid, with which the River Angara commences, mountainous and rugged steeps display their varied scenes of rocky prominences and patches of dusky vegetation. But the shores upon the opposite side the river to that by which our path lay, and the bases of the hills, were obscured from our view by a dense mist, which rose to 100 feet above the surface of the troubled waters. The breadth of

the river at this point is probably about two versts. The edge of the ice of the lake made a curved line, from one point to the other, of the two headlands which form the entrance of the river. From beneath this, the stream was issuing and rushing with impetuous force down the rapid, as far as our sight extended; and, as we heard, to the distance of fifteen versts, throughout the whole of which it is never frozen.

When we had advanced a verst or two from the commencement of the rapids, along the shores of the river, our *yemstchik* pointed out to us a rock which was at intervals partially visible through the sparkling vapours near the middle of the river; and, as we proceeded, he related to us a tale which, though not perfectly intelligible to my companion, and of course myself, enabled us to account for our former *yemstchik's* terrors at this point of our journey. Thus much, however, of his story was clear; that the evil spirit—for among what people do we not find the strange creation which men's imaginations have often endowed even with the attributes of the Deity?—has chosen this rock for his "local habitation," in this romantic land, and that he here sits at his ease amidst the frightful turmoil around, ready, whenever the opportunity occurs, of drawing all the adventurous navigators of the "holy sea" within the dangerous vortices which surround his cold throne. And when there were any wrecked here, the *yemstchik* assured us, and which it was easy to believe, no remains or vestige of the sufferers or their bark were ever found. It is precisely the same with those who perish with their barks in the rapids of the great Canadian river. Whatever is wrecked there is doubtlessly destroyed by the force of the waters rushing over the rough bed across which they flow. But whatever might remain entire here, would be carried far beyond the country inhabited by either civilised or semi-civilised man.

We arrived the same evening at Irkoutsk.

CHAP. XII.

IRKOUTSK.

Design of further Travels.—Difficulties.—Ignorance of the Inhabitants of the Capital of the Country beyond them.—Plan of Travels.—Unexpected Difficulties.—Strange Conduct of a Merchant of the inferior Grade.—The Guilds well named.—Particulars of the Merchant's Conduct.—The Traveller's Doubts of the Cause.—Merchant's Display of his Riches.—Generosity of a Merchant of the First Guild.—Generosity of an exiled Lady.—The Governor accidentally acquainted with the Transaction.—Governor's Interference.—Usury of the Merchant.—Possible palliating Circumstance.

I HAD for some time contemplated prosecuting my travels as far as the coasts of the Pacific Ocean, and, if it were possible, still further; and, upon my return from Kiachta, I commenced collecting the necessary information for carrying out this purpose. The difficulties of the journey were represented to me as insurmountable; but to reports of this kind I was accustomed, and I believed that I knew very well the degree of estimation to which they were entitled. What struck me as most remarkable during my inquiries was, the ignorance displayed by the inhabitants of the capital of Eastern Siberia concerning the whole of the country to the east and the north of them, notwithstanding the communication kept up by the government through its civil and military officers, and the well-known contrary state of things usually prevailing in scantily populated countries, and prevailing indeed in Irkoutsk as far as regarded the settlements that lay upon the side towards Russia. This, too, was at a time when there was a pope among

them, not long since arrived from the most eastern extremity of the empire in Asia.

The plan which the information that I obtained enabled me to form was, to descend the Léna, the most eastern of the three great rivers of Siberia, as far as the last district town of Yakoutsk, and to pass the country between the great river and Ochotsk, which lies upon the coasts of the sea of that name in the Pacific Ocean, and thence to proceed, if possible, to Kamtschakta. I found I might descend the river with some merchants who annually navigated it, and probably cross the desert country to the ocean in the same company; and, as a ship was sent every year by the government of Kamtschakta to Ochotsk, and returned, I trusted I might proceed with her to the great peninsula. But, beyond this, all was uncertain, save that whalers fishing in the sea in the vicinity of that country, frequently put into its ports or bays; and one of these, it was hoped, might appear after our arrival, and afford me the opportunity of proceeding to one of the groups of islands in the great eastern ocean, or of passing over to some part of the western coast of America.

After this plan of travels, however, had been determined upon, and when the arrangements for putting it into execution were nearly completed, and the time at which it was necessary to depart was at hand, a difficulty arose which I had not anticipated, proceeding from the strange conduct of a merchant of Irkoutsk, by which I was very nearly prevented from prosecuting my travels, at least in that direction, for an entire year; and, as the circumstances connected with this affair may illustrate or confirm some opinions expressed in the foregoing pages, concerning the character of a portion of one class of the Russians, I shall relate them.

What has been said of the relations of the merchants to the other grades which compose Russian society, and

of their division into three distinct classes, which are designated by the terms first, second, and third guild, will be remembered; and, certainly, as far as we have even yet seen, it will not be disputed, that the Russian government has acted in this case more wisely than the governments of those countries where the orders in society are less clearly defined. No two characters among men in society can be further removed towards the opposite extremes, than those possessed by the merchants of the first and of the third of the grades into which they are here divided. The three grades might be very appropriately called severally by the names of the metals in which all nations carry on their commercial transactions; for just in proportion as gold is above silver in value, and silver is above copper, is the degree of worth, and the quality of the virtue, of the men in these three well-distinguished grades.

We have seen among those that it may now perhaps be allowable to call the golden class of the Russian merchants, one virtue, among others, particularly prevail; and that, such as must exercise a beneficial influence upon the morals of society generally, and is alike honourable to the government which gave this turn to the wealth of the country, and to the parties that have thus employed their riches. It is not the integrity of the first class of merchants in their business transactions, nor their proverbial hospitality, which latter virtue is common to all the Russians, but the active solicitude which they display about the education of their children, and the youth in general of their country, to which we refer. Thus men now, who have had the benefit of education, constantly rise from the third grade of the commercial classes to the highest, and sometimes their sons to the rank, not the meanest, of nobility, and in the Czar's uniform gain those decorations which open the way to their admission to the highest offices of

trust that the state of society and the Russian system admit.

Among the second grade, or silver class of merchants, instances of the same solicitude for the advance of the younger branches of their families, are not rare. But among the third, or the copper class, we find every thing that contributes to establish the characters of men, in the opposite extreme. The lower classes of the *chinovnik* can alone be compared with them. Usury, intemperance, gaming, and roguery under many forms, are the characteristics by which they are chiefly distinguished. And only to name their numbers would be a sufficient argument against the success, at the present time at least, of any attempt to put society generally upon a different footing in Russia from that upon which it exists.

We may now return to the particular transaction which has led to these additional remarks upon the Russian trading classes.

I had, upon my arrival at Irkoutsk, waited on a resident merchant, to present a letter of credit for such money as I might require to prosecute any further travels that I might undertake, after a convenient sojourn at this place. On account of my deficiency in the language, I was accompanied by my fellow-traveller from Krasnoyarsk, who presented the letter, and through whom I was informed that the credit was accepted. The merchant added, however, that he had not the money at the moment in the house, if it were immediately wanted. But, upon his being told that I should not require it before the spring, and as it was now only mid-winter, no difficulty seemed to remain, and we took our leave.

After this I thought nothing more of the matter, until a few days before the epoch I had fixed upon for leaving Irkoutsk, when I called again upon the merchant,

accompanied by the same interpreter as before, for the purpose of receiving the money, of which I was now in want. We found the merchant seated in the small counting-room, at his desk, alone, beneath his own portrait. He received us as he had done before; and, as soon as we were seated, my fellow-traveller recalled to his memory our former visit, reminded him of his engagement, and informed him that, as I was now upon the point of quitting Irkoutsk, I had called to receive from him the amount of the letter of credit. Nothing, during the time that had elapsed since our first visit, had been further from my thoughts than the probability of any refusal, on any pretence, on the part of the merchant, to pay the money at the time that it would be required. It had appeared, indeed, rather strange, both to my former companion and myself, when we considered the matter, after we left him on the first occasion, that he should not have any money whatever, as we understood him to state, in hand. But, as I subsequently heard that it was not the custom of the Siberian merchants to keep money in their houses, I thought no more about it. Thus, I was never more astonished than at this moment, when I found him positively deny even his acceptance of the letter of credit, and add his request, that I would write to St. Petersburg for the money.

The cause of his denial of having accepted the letter, and his refusal to pay the money, were in reality a mystery to us. He contended, indeed, that the security was not sufficient; but which we could not believe to be his real reason, since one of the first merchants of St. Petersburg, and one of the richest owners of Siberian mines residing in the same capital, were his securities. The merchant who had acted as my banker at St. Petersburg, having no correspondent at Irkoutsk, had transferred the business to one of a company of proprie-

tors of mines, whose chief transactions were necessarily with this country, and he had sent me the letter of credit, which thus became a double security, independent of that which he had, from its being well known that I was not travelling without ample evidence of respectability. Thus I could not help doubting that the merchant of Irkoutsk had the money, or the credit to raise it. However, whether in terror of subjecting himself to suspicions very dangerous to the repose of a mercantile man, or from any other cause, he sent word to the gentleman who had acted as interpreter between us, to say that he wished very much that he would do him the favour to call upon him; and, upon my friend so doing, he showed him notes to a large amount, which only however made the mystery of his conduct so much the greater. In the mean time he continued to persist in his refusal to pay the money, and there seemed no means of convincing him, either of the absurdity or the wickedness of his conduct.

What to do I found it difficult to determine. I must now return to Europe, or remain a year at Irkoutsk, unless there were some means of obtaining immediate justice. But, while I was considering what steps I should take, my anxiety, at least as far as being prevented setting out on my journey, was relieved, provided I could make up my mind to become a borrower. The story concerning the conduct of the merchant, and my probable detention, was too rare a little piece of news to escape the report of the many-tongued rumour of the capital, and the effect it produced was an immediate flow of feeling, as honourable to the Siberian merchants of the first grade as the transaction was discreditable to those of the grade, whichever it might be of the other two, to which this man belonged. The merchant at whose house I have already reported having received the proofs of true

Russian hospitality, but whose name has escaped my memory, sent me word immediately the story was told to him, that it would afford him much pleasure to cash the letter of credit in question. And, besides this, a lady with whom I was well acquainted among those in voluntary exile with their husbands, and who had been allowed by the government to enjoy all or a part of her ancient patrimony, sent me word also, that, although she had no money, she would give her house as security to raise the sum required, rather than that I should be detained.

My embarrassment was now only whether I should take advantage of one of these offers, or whether I should pursue the unpleasant course of soliciting the governor-general's influence with the repudiating merchant, which I knew to be the only means of compelling justice. But I was most unwilling to appear before his excellency as a complainant of one of the burghers under his government, after all the politeness which had been so generally shown me. I was, however, accidentally relieved from this difficulty by the turn of the table-talk at the government-house a few evenings before that upon which, if at all, I must necessarily depart. The general happened to ask what day I had fixed upon to leave Irkoutsk; and, when I named the day, a gentleman present immediately contradicted me, by saying that I could not go, on account of there not being, as he expressed himself, money enough in the Siberian capital to furnish my wants. This remark of course led to an explanation, and afterwards to an offer from the governor, unsolicited, to send for the merchant to require his explanation. I could not of course refuse this obliging offer, though I begged that my explanation of the matter might not be considered as a formal complaint. The governor well

appreciated this feeling, and the mere table-talk on the subject for the present dropped.

The next morning the merchant was summoned to the palace; and the governor, finding, upon the man's own statement, that his act was disgraceful to the lowest trader of the town, informed him what course was honourable, and what was his duty to perform in this matter, which, it need scarcely be added, produced me the money the same day. I feel compelled to add, however, that the money was not paid without the exaction, which it was out of the question my disputing, after what had occurred, of twenty silver rubles for the advance of the money. But, as this account of the transaction is but the version of one of the parties concerned, I feel equally compelled to state, that several of our friends were of opinion that our interpreter had been mistaken in the first instance, and that the letter of credit was never accepted, which, were it so, would at least palliate the wickedness, though not the folly and incivility, of the transaction.

CHAP. XIII.

JOURNEY TO THE RIVER LÉNA. — COMMENCEMENT OF THE VOYAGE UPON THE LÉNA.

Departure from Irkoutsk. — Aspect of the Country. — Village of Kondine. — Former Residence of Exiles of Rank. — Improved Appearance of the Country. — Cultivation. — Highlands. — Bouriat Inhabitants. — Arrival at the Léna. — A River-port. — Commerce in the Country. — Village of Katschougskaia. — Distinct Races. — Description of the Craft of the Léna. — Navigators of the River. — Their Armaments. — Our Crew. — Our Cargo. — Manner of conducting the Boats. — Departure. — Prayers. — Villages of the Léna. — Improved Appearance of the Country. — Character of the Villages. — Forests. — The Cuckoo. — Aquatic Birds. — Driven on a Bank. — Hints to Navigators of great Rivers. — Ice on the Shores. — Fine Weather. — Hills and Forests. — Broad Reaches of the River. — Kirenske.

At length, upon the morning of the 9th of May, the 21st of our time, after having the day before taken a last leave of all my good friends at Irkoutsk, I left the town, in company with a Siberian merchant, who was bound upon an enterprise as far as the port of Ochotsk, upon the eastern coast of Siberia. The merchant had already despatched his wares by several waggons of the country, to meet his vessels, which were lying at Katschougskaia upon the Léna, at the distance of 250 versts from Irkoutsk, and where it was our intention to embark upon the great river which we were to descend for near 3000 versts upon our direct way.

It had been my intention to keep possession of my Swiss servant and interpreter, whom I had retained since our return from Kiachta; but I was unable to deter-

mine upon so doing, on account of the uncertainty of the future, which rendered it doubtful whether I was sufficiently provided with funds for every eventuality, unless I should hear again from Russia before my departure. I had written to Europe for an additional supply, but the communication having been cut off for some time by the inundations, as we afterwards heard, of the Volga, which were greater than usual at this season, I received no reply; and I was obliged to depart with no more funds than I thought my own absolute necessities required, and therefore without either servant or interpreter.

The carriage in which we left Irkoutsk was a *tarantass*, precisely similar to that in which I had performed the long journey of the previous summer. We took two horses over the three by which this vehicle is usually drawn, in anticipation of finding the roads very wet and bad; but they were drier than we expected, though very rough and irregular, and we were able to travel at our wonted Russian speed.

The country presented here more variety in the natural vegetation, and more cultivated land, than that in the immediate vicinity of Irkoutsk, upon the opposite side of the town. Its inhabitants are partly Bouriats, and partly Russo-Siberians, the descendants of exiles. At ten o'clock we passed some hills, which are called the Kalacke Mountains, and at mid-day we arrived at the village of Kondineskaia, twenty-three versts from Irkoutsk.

The country around this village still presented the same superior air of improvement over that upon the south side of the capital. Several of the higher class political exiles had chosen this spot for their residence, during the period between the cessation of the chief restraints upon their actions, and that at which they were permitted to dwell in the towns. Our *yemstchik*

pointed out to us a house pleasantly situated upon the declivity of a hill, at a distance of half a verst from the village, which was for some years occupied by one of the higher in rank of this order of exiles, who is now residing at Irkoutsk.

The country after this during the day presented to us the same natural features, with intervals of arable land, which, as we perceived from the somewhat spare stubble of the preceding year, had borne crops of rye, barley, and oats.

Early on the day after that on which we commenced our journey, we arrived at a small village called Manšourskaia, where we breakfasted. After this, we found the country still improving in natural fertility and agreeable views. A long range of hills appeared on our left hand, at further and nearer distances, as we proceeded; and sometimes, upon our right, the river upon which we were to embark a little further from its source, was seen wending its course through a still more varied country than any I had seen any where on this side of the Ural Mountains; unless, indeed, the shores of the Selenga, which, at the season at which I visited them, exhibited every thing to great disadvantage, might be an exception.

We found the country now chiefly inhabited by the Bouriats; and the effects of their sobriety, generally, with its accustomed attendant, steady industry, were here, as on the opposite side of the Baikal, seen to great advantage, compared with the progress of the Russo-Siberians.

As the day advanced, we found the country flatter and the scenery tamer. Early in the afternoon, after crossing an alluvial plain, we arrived at the place of embarkation upon the great river we were to descend. Here we found a marshy point of land, forming the inner side of an elbow of the river. By the bank of

the stream stood a number of huts and temporary sheds; and on the river, moored to the shore, were lying ten or twelve roughly constructed flat-bottomed craft. This little settlement is called the port of Mansursk. Immediately opposite to it is the village of Katschougskaia, seated upon more elevated ground; though the side on which we arrived has been chosen as more convenient for loading the craft which are to descend the river, as all the cargoes they carry come direct from Irkoutsk. At this point of the Léna is embarked all the merchandise designed for exchanging for furs, which are procured from the various tribes of the native inhabitants throughout the entire north-eastern districts of Siberia.

This mighty river, even here, at the distance of more than 4000 versts from the Arctic Sea, into which its waters fall, is a deep and clear stream, of about the breadth of our Thames at London; and it is at this season, perhaps, more rapid than any part of any navigable river in the world, except some portions of the Saint Lawrence, properly called the Rapids. It presents, as well here as at many other points of its course, the same peculiarity which has been noticed as prevailing with other rivers both in Russia Proper and in Siberia, of high banks on the right hand along the course through which it flows, and more frequently low and marshy land, which is often subject to inundations, upon the opposite shores.

The village of Katschougskaia possesses a church, which is painted in gaudy yellow, and has some of the better sort of Siberian houses ranged along the high bank by the river, which, together, give to the place rather a gay and agreeable aspect.

I visited this village during the time we were detained here. It is inhabited by Russo-Siberians and Bouriats, the latter being the most numerous. Its

site has been well chosen; but it has nothing remarkable within it, and nothing differing from the ordinary Siberian villages inhabited by the same mixed races.

We found the craft by which we were to proceed, lying against the low banks of the river, in company with several others of the same description, all awaiting the arrival of their cargoes; and, as our merchandise had not yet reached the port, we had ample time to make all our necessary preparations for the river voyage, which we could not calculate upon accomplishing in much less than a month.

The boats, if boats they might be termed, were mere frail flat-bottomed craft, something resembling in form such of our river barges as are not rounded at the stem and stern. They are formed of stout planks, which are obtained from the forests that are found near the sources of the river, and are put together for the purpose of descending the rapid current, without being intended to return with the merchandise for which the cargoes that they carry are exchanged. They are nearly uniform in construction; and for the security of the merchandise which they carry, against rain, they have a covering of planks forming a roof similar to that of many houses, each plank being placed fore and aft, and lapping over that below it. On their arrival at their destination, they are broken up; and the merchandise taken in exchange for their cargoes, which consists chiefly of furs, is sometimes brought up the stream in smaller craft, which are impelled by both oar and sail, and sometimes in *sani* upon the ice in winter.

As no more merchandise arrived to-day than some few packages, which reached the port in the morning, the crews of the whole flat-bottomed fleet had the evening at their disposal; and, at the close of the day,

they fell to amusing themselves in the manner that agreed best with their habits and character.

During the first part of the evening, the scene was like that of a little *gostinnoi dvor.* Every one was busy, buying or selling among the stalls of the little temporary settlement, or eating or drinking. After this they seemed to pursue their several inclinations, well agreed, at least, in one of these, which was, in doing justice to the precious *vodka.* Those who belonged to the shore were chiefly Russo-Siberians and Bouriats, with a few Tatars; but among the crews of the vessels were mingled a fair proportion of Yakoutes, the proper inhabitants of the country that we were approaching. The Russo-Siberians sat chiefly drinking beneath the sheds, all telling stories at the same time, with nobody to listen to them; and of these there were some whose caftan and bonnet indicated that they had known better breeding. The Bouriats and the Yakoutes sat on the ground around their fires and cauldrons of *stchee,* until "in swinish sleep, their drenched natures lay" stretched out upon the wet surface of the ground.

That which to a stranger appeared the most remarkable in this scene, was the perfect harmony which prevailed among so many people of such different races. In an assemblage of between 100 and 200 boatmen, of three or more semi-barbarous tribes, when there was no longer a particle left among them of that attribute of humanity which chiefly distinguishes us from the beasts of the field, not a quarrel, not a dispute of any sort, arose. If we were to seek for the cause of this absence of the ordinary concomitant in most countries of drunken habits, we should perhaps find it arise from a certain habitual dread of disobedience to the law, which they know, as long as they have a grain of sense

left, they might, while disputing among one another, unconsciously commit.

There were also a number of women in the sheds during the day; but they, for the most part, retired at an early hour to their homes, upon the opposite side of the river.

After a walk among these scenes of intemperance, I retired on board our craft, and lay down upon some bales of merchandise, and slept out the rest of the night very comfortably.

Upon awaking the next morning, I found all hands actively engaged on board and on shore, in shipping and stowing the remainder of our cargo, which had arrived during the night; and not a man appeared to be a whit the less active, or exhibited any more signs of the debauch of the preceding evening, than if there had been nothing drunk that was stronger than *quass*.

Several of the boats were able to proceed on their voyage during this day: and upon the following, after passing a similar night to the last, we were ready at an early hour; and soon after sunrise, our men were mustered, and every thing made ready for our departure. Our crew consisted of three Russo-Siberians, two Tatars, and three Yakoutes, commanded by an old navigator of the river of the first-mentioned of these races; and there were, as passengers, the merchant, his chief man of business, two soldiers, and myself. Our cargo consisted of tea, Chinese sugar, hardware, silk stuffs, Chinese cotton, yarns, cloth, *vodka*, rye and wheaten flour, rope, and various minor articles of merchandise.

The weather was fine on the day we commenced our river voyage; and, although there was a great deal of ice still remaining upon the shores of the river, the main channel was clear, and we pushed out into the stream and committed ourselves to the guidance of the current, now running at the rate of seven versts an

hour. All, indeed, that it is possible for the crews of these craft to perform after the voyage is commenced, is to obtain a little influence over the direction of the drift by means of large oars. By these, the shapeless and frail vessel is made to avoid the shoals on which, without their aid, she would frequently ground.

The position at which we had been moored was a little above the village; and as we now swept rapidly by its holy edifice, which formed a conspicuous object, all, save the Tatars, doffed their caps and fell upon their knees, and, with many crossings, offered up their petitions to the Virgin, to conduct us in safety to the end of our voyage.

As we lost sight of the village of Katschougskaia, we had steep hills on either side of our course, thinly covered with mixed woods, chiefly of the fir tribes; and there were here and there some small patches of cultivated land. During the second hour, we were driving through narrower passes of the river, between steep cliffs of red sandstone of considerable elevation. All that was here visible of the soil upon the banks of the river and upon the hills was of the same colour as the cliffs, and the woods were still of fir thinly sown.

Soon after we had swept through these narrow passages, we passed by the Russo-Siberian village of Korkinskaya, upon the right bank of the river. The position of this village seemed as isolated and desolate as could well be conceived.

Two hours after this, we passed the village of Ponomarefskaya upon the same side of the river. The country was now less hilly, and we observed a greater variety of vegetation in the natural forests; and there was also more cultivation to be seen at a distance from the banks of the river.

Before noon, we passed the village Yigolafskaya, upon our right hand; and three hours later, we brought up

at Oustilguinskaya, a considerable village, with two churches, one of which was in a state of decay, and the other not quite finished.

The last-mentioned of these villages, the captain of our boat informed us, contained an industrious population and a manufactory of stockings and nightcaps, both of which articles were produced entirely by the hand. We stopped here for a short time to endeavour to obtain some milk for our supper, in which we were successful.

At a distance of twenty versts further, we passed the small village of Bolofskaya. Here the colour of the soil along the inclined planes, more particularly upon the right bank of the river, indicated the existence of iron ore. During the afternoon we passed several of the smaller description of villages, and we found the country generally improving in aspect, with the firs in which it abounded of superior growth.

But it is necessary here to observe, that these villages, by which we were passing with such rapidity, as well as all that may not, as we proceed, be especially noticed, consist generally but of mere settlements of some half-dozen or dozen houses, and sometimes of not more than one or two, with small patches of cultivated land, but without any claim to be designated villages, save the names given them by the government on account of their being made stations for the winter posts.

The face of the country as we proceeded continued to improve in appearance by the increase in the variety of the vegetation with which the hills were decked. The silver birch was now abundant, and there were more pines of a larger growth than we had before seen, distributed among the lesser species of the fir tribes. Before sunset we observed the first signs of the close of the winter sleep of the vegetable world, in the green tinge among the birches, where they were more thickly

sown in the sheltered valleys. We had the cheering voice, too, of the cuckoo at intervals during the day. At night we brought up and moored against the banks of the river, at 170 versts from our place of embarkation, as it was not prudent to continue to drift during the hours of darkness, while we were at this part of the rapid river. Very little use may be made of the oars during the daylight in these craft upon the Léna, and none at all during the darkness: so that, by a freak of the current, the boats are sometimes carried into the midst of an inundated plain, and left without the possibility of recovering them. When this occurs, their cargoes are detained, until they can be transported upon the ice during the succeeding winter, or re-shipped on board new craft during the following summer.

We did not recommence our drift the next morning until an hour after sunrise. At nine o'clock we passed several houses with a small piece of cultivated land. The country on both sides of the river was here varied with hill and dale; and in many places, the vegetation, from the highest trees to the lowest, was of the "second growth." At distances apart, stood the tall trunks of pines, presenting the traces of the element that had consumed the original forest, and surrounded with birches and spruces, which were sown scantily upon the declivities of the hills, but in great abundance in the valleys.

We had to-day a strong northerly wind, which was directly against us, and we did not drift with the same rapidity, nor glide so gently down the stream, as on the previous day. The force of the wind, too, and the eddies and whirlpools, caused in part by the opposition of the wind in the open reaches, kept the crew actively occupied in directing the course of the drift during the whole of the day. During the afternoon, we passed by

the village of Omoloofskaya, which had both an old and a new church similar to those of Verkolinsk.

On the evening of this day, we had some difficulty in getting to moorings; but we finally placed ourselves beneath the banks of the river by the village of Ouste-Koutskaya, near the point at which the tributary river of that name falls into the Léna. There is here a distillery of *vodka;* and there is a church in the act of building, to replace one now in a state of decay.

On the following morning, we cast off from the river's bank at the break of day. The wind had now abated, and the weather was serene, with the sky clear; and the thermometer was standing at 11 degrees of heat. Early in the day we passed a village, which presented the same gloomy aspect as the majority of those we saw.

We had observed but few aquatic birds before to-day; but the ducks of several varieties in their kind were here seen sailing about upon the stream or upon the wing in large flocks. But they were wilder than might have been expected, where they must be so rarely disturbed. We put out a canoe, without succeeding in approaching within shot of any of them; and one only was killed by one of the men from the boat as we drifted.

In the middle of this day we brought up at the village of Kosarki, for the purpose of purchasing rope, of which there is here a little manufactory; but this did not detain us long.

The country, as we proceeded, continued to present the same aspect as that which we had hitherto usually seen since our embarkation. In the afternoon we met with a little accident, which, as it gave occasion for the display of the inventive genius of the Siberian boatmen, deserves particular notice.

While we were drifting at the usual rate, and the

hands were engaged in obtaining all the influence in their power over the vessel's course, we unavoidably fell upon a sand-bank, which formed part of a small island near the centre of the stream. From the position in which the vessel was thrown, arose our difficulty. As her bow struck the bank, and she received the force of the current, she swung round, and brought up with her stern fast aground. All the ordinary means were now resorted to to get her off. An anchor was taken out, and the crew worked hard at the oars; but all was in vain, until the following means were employed.

A long and broad plank was first laid flat on the water in a direction perpendicular to the side of the vessel, with one end fastened to her near the quarter, and the other attached to her stern by a stout rope. This rope, at the end which held the plank, was divided into two parts, each of which was fastened to one of the corners of the plank in a manner similar to that in which a line is attached to a log-ship, to measure the knots that a ship is running, or as ropes are attached to the slabs of a pair of scales. But, in order to keep the plank for the present flat upon the water, another rope that was sufficiently strong to resist the force of the current and retain the plank in its position, while the edge only was opposed to the stream, was attached singly to one of the corners, by which all was kept perfectly steady until the moment at which the force was required. At this moment, the shorter rope was slackened or let go, upon which the plank turned upon its edge, and in this position received the full force of the current, which, as it is evident from the relative position of the plank and the vessel, and the course of the stream, was not a dead pull, but rather that of a lever, not unlike such as is formed by the wheel of a water-mill.

The immediate effect of the turning of the plank was the swinging round of our vessel, till her side was

exposed to the current in its strength, upon which she floated directly into the channel of the river; and thus, after about two hours' delay, we were again gliding down the smooth and rapid stream.

The country through which we passed towards the evening of this day was thicker sown with firs than any we had before seen; and, in some places, the hills upon our left hand presented entire groves of red and white pine. We continued to drift this evening as long as it was possible, and at night, moored by the shore where there were no habitations.

Early the next morning we passed a village with a church. This day was showery, with a cold northerly wind; but nothing obstructed our way, or called for any exertion on the part of the crew: and we glided smoothly along between the hills, which were covered with still thicker groves of pine than we had any where before seen, and composed also of trees of a larger growth.

We had found the ice upon the shores as we proceeded every day in greater quantities. But it was lying in some of the coves, in fields undisturbed by the current that swept down the channel of the river; and in some places it was strewed in large masses upon the shores on both sides. From this, it seemed evident, that we were advancing more rapidly northwards than the genial summer heat. But if we were outstripping the effects of the sun in our progress, we had, however, the advantage of lengthening the day in a greater proportion, by the change of our latitude, than by the advance of the sun. It was now the 15th (our 27th) of May, and we were already north of the 55th degree, where the period that the sun at this season is below the horizon during the twenty-four hours little exceeds six hours; and, when the sky was clear, the night was

light enough to admit of our continuing our drift, without any necessity for mooring.

The next morning, we swept rapidly by the village of Urkutsk, upon the left bank of the river. Immediately after this, we passed the tributary river, Kuta, which here meets the parent stream. Salt, which is obtained from some low land near the sources of this river, is manufactured here, and sent through all the northern and eastern districts of Siberia.

The next day we had a return of the finest weather, with light and favourable winds. The thermometer at eight o'clock in the morning was at 11 degrees of heat, and at mid-day the rays of the sun were scorching, though we were still floating between banks of ice, or broken masses of the frozen element, which were lying along the shore upon either side. At twelve o'clock, we passed the village of Markofskaya, with a church.

Throughout the greater part of our drift during to-day, the serpentine course of the stream, with the character of the hills, gave more than usual variety to the scenery around, and to the river, very often the appearance of a lake. The hills were here steeper and higher than those we had before past, and were covered with red pine forests, apparently of a "second growth;" but the woods were very open, and the trees were not large. Nevertheless, the canoes that were to be seen at the villages, were made of single trunks of trees, rudely hollowed out, and were of large dimensions; and, as this attested the existence of very fine pine groves at some part or other of the river, we were led to inquire of the peasants where these groves were: but all the information we received was, that they did not go far to find them.

In the evening it became calm, and the scenery was greatly changed. We seemed now, from the distance which we were able to see before us, as if we were

gliding into an open and champaign country; and the water was so still, that the hills, and the forests that clothed them, were reflected upon its surface on either side, almost as distinctly as from an artificial mirror. In the meantime, our course was so gentle, though so rapid, that we were only sensible of being in motion, by the perpetual variations of the landscape.

The next day we were drifting in broader reaches of the river, and there appeared to be some slight diminution in the strength of the current. But the scenery presented the same features as during the last two or three days.

In the afternoon of this day, the 18th of the month, we reached Kirensk.

CHAP. XIV.

VOYAGE DOWN THE LÉNA—*continued.*

Kirensk.—Incivility of the Officials.—Captain of our Boat ill.—Aspect of the Country bordering the River.—Driven by the Current into an inundated Forest.—Hints to Navigators of Rivers.—Elevated Country.—Rocky Hills.—Vintimskaya.—Drunken Magistrate.—Arrest of the Traveller.—Ill Treatment of a Soldier.—Seizure of our Papers.—Detention of the Vessel.—Proceed on our Voyage.—Advantage of Moderation in Anger.

KIRENSK is a small new town, with an old and a new church, and a chapel, and is honoured by the residence of a *gorodnichii* of police, and a *zasidytell,* or inferior magistrate, as before-mentioned, to an *ispravnik.*

As this was the first place which we came to upon the Léna that had begun to assume the dignity of a town, it was also the first at which we had any vexations and detention. The merchant had some goods to leave here, which subjected us to so many formalities, and gave the *chinovnik* of the place so good an occasion of practising their wilful annoyances, that they involved the loss of the whole of the afternoon of the day of our arrival, and the night that followed, and a part of the next day. Even the passports afforded the occasion to detain and give us trouble. Happily, however, in my own case, the letters from the governor-general with which I was provided, superseded the necessity of any such document. Indeed, it must be acknowledged that all the *chinovnik,* and all persons in authority every where, had but to be told of the existence of such letters to respect them.

The captain of our boat had, unfortunately, been taken ill upon our arrival here, and we were now threatened with the total loss of his services, for perhaps the greater part of the remainder of the voyage. He had been paddling with the rest in the water for two hours, upon the occasion of our being aground; and the hardy boatman of the Léna—for not even the stoutest of men is exempt from the effects of exposure—was now laid up with a cold, accompanied with some fever, and a swoln throat.

Immediately after passing Kirensk, we drifted by some remarkable granite rocks of a red colour, forming the left bank of the river, and apparently between 600 and 1000 feet in height. The appearance of these rocky steeps was the more singular, as the country upon the opposite side of the river was quite of a different character. Here the land was lower than usual, and covered with firs, more stunted generally than those we had lately seen. It formed the most remarkable exception that I had any where the opportunity of observing, in either Russia or Siberia, to the general prevalence of higher land upon the right than upon the left banks of the rivers. At sun-set we passed a village with a church.

The river continued to increase very gradually in breadth as we proceeded, and its volume of water, in the same proportion to augment by the tributaries that fell into its main stream; and there appeared to be no diminution in the force of the current.

The day after we quitted Kirensk, we were detained an entire day by an accident, which was attributed to the unavoidable absence of our chief pilot from his duties. This accident was of the same character as the last. But, instead of driving upon a sand bank, we became entangled amidst the spreading branches of the trees in the midst of a forest. We had at Kirensk,

for the first time, observed any considerable inundation; and we were there first warned, that we must now be more attentive than ever to our pilotage. Nevertheless, some mistake appeared to have been made, in directing the course of our ponderous and unwieldy craft, which was not discovered until it was too late. Thus we now drifted upon a large island, of which nothing appeared above the water save a portion of the birches that covered it. When we first perceived that we were approaching this apparently sunken isle, every effort was made to divert the course of the vessel. But all was in vain; and we drifted swiftly down a perfect avenue, formed of the tops of the slender birch trees. The scene was most novel to us, as we glided down the rural canal; but while we all stood helpless, and gazing at the forest, and trusting that we should pass safely over the isle, we suddenly came to an abrupt termination of the passage, forming a sort of *cul de sac*, where we were completely entangled in the branches of the birches, and our drift arrested, without a hope of regaining the main channel of the river by any other means than retracing our course for the whole of the distance we had passed through the forest. To do this was, however, no easy matter, owing to the force of the current against us.

We spent some time in this disagreeable position, quite undecided, while we still wanted our chief pilot, what steps to take, to enable us to regain the river. By some it was proposed to cut away the tops of the trees that lay in our path; but this was found impracticable; and by others to work the boat through portions of the forest that appeared more open than the rest; but this afforded no prospect of success, for we could not judge of our distance from the river in any direction, and a canoe put out to reconnoitre would certainly upset the very moment she left the main

channel. However, we finally sent out ropes by our canoe against the stream, to be fastened to the firmest trees that could be found, to endeavour to drag the boat directly up the passage down which we had drifted. But we spent the entire day, and completely exhausted the whole of our crew, before we recovered by this means a quarter of the distance, which was probably a verst, that we had drifted into the forest. During the night, however, our merchant, and a part of our crew, paddled up the channel in the canoe, and went in search of some settlement; but, finding no inhabitants within twenty versts of where we lay, they did not return until the following day. By the aid, however, of a strong party of peasants, which they now brought with them, we finally warped ourselves out of the labyrinth early upon the day after that on which we had drifted into it; and we were well satisfied when we found ourselves once more driving down the open stream.

How many oaths were made on this occasion, or how many saints rudely invoked, though there seemed to be many, I am not able to say; but certainly some amends were made for any moderate quantity when our troubles were over; for, as soon as we found ourselves again gliding freely down the mid-channel of the river, the whole crew threw down their oars and fell upon their knees, and returned thanks for our escape from the necessity with which we had been threatened, of having to abandon our vessel, which would have been shipwreck to the merchant, and have left myself to seek whatever means I might find to continue my descent of the great river.

I have travelled in company with men of a less energetic temperament, who, in our case, would first have exhausted all their prayers, and exerted themselves, if at all, after they had found their piety unavailing; but

certainly the practice of the boatmen of the Léna is better, "*aide toi, et le Ciel t'aidera.*"

During the greater part of this day, with the exception of the tops of the trees of several such seemingly sunken islands as that upon which we had grounded, we had the same scenery of hills and valleys generally scantily sown with the several varieties of firs of stunted growth, and occasional groves of pines, with here and there a few birches, along the high banks of the river, and in the valleys. Towards evening, granite rocks, of higher and lower elevations, appeared upon the land; and there was a greater abundance of ice to be seen on the shores, and of snow upon the hills.

The day after that on which we got clear of the sunken island, we observed granite rocks still prevailing upon both sides of the river; and the moving panorama around us presented several picturesque scenes. We observed, too, still more snow upon the sides of the hills, and greater quantities of ice on the shores, during the day's drift, than we had seen at any part of the river we had previously passed by.

At two hours after noon of this day, we passed a hill near the river, of greater altitude than any we had before observed; and, as it was reported, according to the information of our pilots, to have a sulphurous spring at its base, I took the canoe, and went on shore with one of the crew, as the weightier craft drifted, in order to obtain some of the water. But we were not able to discover the spring during the short time that we could conveniently remain.

Early during the same afternoon, we passed the village of Tschouiskaya; and, at the distance of twenty-one versts further, we moored at the village or very small town of Vitimskaya, where our merchant had some business to transact.

At this place occurred one of those little adventures

attended with inconveniences, to which a traveller must be occasionally exposed, but the circumstances of which, however unimportant in their result, the character of this narrative demands should be exactly related.

As soon as we were moored, the merchant and his man of business went on shore to transact their affairs; but I did not, upon this occasion, as had been my custom at other times, accompany them. Shortly, however, after they left the vessel, my attention was attracted by the firing of guns, which I thought it very likely was intended to welcome our arrival, as the first boat very possibly of the season; and my curiosity was at the same time attracted by the appearance of a wigwam in the midst of the wooden huts of the village, which I was told, upon inquiry, was one of the kind dwelt in by the Tungouse, already mentioned as one of the nomadic tribes of this part of Siberia. Influenced by my curiosity on both these accounts, I marched on shore quite alone, and first set off to inspect the Tungouse wigwam. This I found, however, empty; and I had only here the opportunity of observing that, both in materials and in construction, this wigwam precisely resembled those of the degraded tribe of Indians of North America, the Micmacs, who are found hardly in a state of society, in that portion of the British provinces which is the most settled by the European races.

From this I directed my steps towards the opposite end of the village, which appeared to be the quarter at which the firing was still heard. As I proceeded, I met two parties, each consisting of three or four persons of both sexes, some of whom were dressed in European costume, and some in the *schouba*. The women, however, who were without *schoubas*, were decked in such gaudy colours, that I was in doubt whether they wore fancy dresses for the occasion of some *fête*, or whether

they were attired in the height of the fashion of the ladies of the Léna. It did not occur to me to recognise the parties as I passed by them, which, though I saw no uniform civil or military among them, I should otherwise probably not have omitted. I had not, however, proceeded many paces, after passing them, before I was followed by one of the gentlemen of the second party, who called out something which I did not understand. Upon my stopping, however, he came up, and demanded, as far as I could understand him, my name and my business. But such was the rude manner of the man's addressing me, that I felt under no obligation to be very polite in return. Nevertheless, I told him my name, and then added, or endeavoured to do so—for I cannot undertake to say that I made myself understood—"As to my business, it is sufficient that I have a passport, which, when I know that you are authorised to demand it, you shall see." Upon this he appeared satisfied, and left me. But by the time that I had advanced thirty or forty paces further, he called again to me to stop; which summons, of course, I obeyed; and he now came up to the spot on which I stood, and, after placing himself directly in my path, put some question to me, in words, indeed, which I did not understand, but in such a manner that it required no skill in any particular idiom to comprehend enough of to deem them to be impertinent.

My answer to this unexpected incivility was now, of course, short. I said, indeed, merely, "*Nayrazoumaiou*" (I do not understand you). Upon this, the fellow launched into a strain of violent language, accompanied, as it appeared to me, from the manner in which he suited his actions to his words, with parallel threats. However, I repeated the words I had before used, with an accent intended to correspond to the style of the language addressed to me. Thus far, however, there

was nothing like violence offered. But, upon my now turning to walk on, the man threw himself directly in my way, and flourishing a stick over my head, threatened to use it, in a manner that it was impossible to misunderstand, in case I should attempt to proceed further in the direction I was going. Upon this, I seized the stick, wrested it from his hands, and threatened him precisely in the same manner that I had been threatened myself, and, as it is proper to confess, not without using words, which, in their turn, could not be taken for syllables of peace, but which, to those who affect not great refinement, certainly afford some relief to anger, even in cases when we know their meaning is not so much as guessed by those to whom they are addressed.

On my thus returning the compliment of threats for which the man had made me his debtor, he drew back, wonderfully astonished, and called out to several peasants that had been following his party, and were now at hand, commanding them, in words that were equivalent, as they were afterwards repeated to me, to "arrest the spy."

I was now instantly seized by three or four stout fellows, who quickly tore my *schouba* from my back, and tied my arms behind with my own scarf. And in this condition I was marched off towards, as I supposed, some village prison. It happened, however, that one of the soldiers, who was passenger with us, passed by at this moment; and, as soon as he perceived the outrage that had been committed, though he did not utter a word, or seem to trouble himself about the matter, he turned back from the way he was going, and set off to convey information to the merchant and his man of business of the disagreeable position of their fellow-passenger. In the meantime, before any one arrived, through whom an explanation could take place, the news of the arrest

had found its way to the vessel; and our other soldier on board, who was a corporal and a very sensible fellow, shocked at the intelligence, had set off immediately for the scene of the outrage. This soldier met us on our way towards some village prison, and began at once to expostulate with the violent man, who, it appeared, was a *zasidytell* or officer, who acts as the chief magistrate of a district, where there has been no *ispravnik*, or higher officer appointed, and which, indeed, I had already discovered from the conversation and actions of the peasants, by whom he had been so promptly obeyed. This, however, became the signal for something more than threats towards the charitable soldier; for the brave magistrate now seized the good man's hat, which had not been doffed, and proceeded to thrash the poor fellow most unmercifully with his stick. The soldier, however, bore this with excellent command of temper, and the most exemplary respect for the office of his persecutor, by whom authority was so monstrously abused. But as soon as he was able, he turned and walked off; and I observed him afterwards, as we proceeded more slowly, making all possible haste, in search, as there could be no doubt, of the merchant and his man of business. He soon met my two fellow-passengers, who, having heard of the arrest from the other soldier, were already in search of me; the parties encountered, while I was still in charge of the two peasants, but without the magistrate, who was following very leisurely at some distance.

The merchant, by asking some questions of the peasants, contrived, without attempting to stop them in the execution of the *zasidytell's* orders, to detain us until the arrival of the magistrate, who, when he came up, without putting any questions, threatened to treat them as he had done the soldier. My friends immediately perceived that the man was inebriated.

They knew, however, that it was not easy for any one to be in such a condition as not to remember the purport of such words as indicated the consequences of ill-treating a foreigner, and more particularly one travelling under the especial protection of the governor-in-chief of the country; and these were no sooner uttered than I was released.

But there was yet another act in the farce. The drunken magistrate now demanded to be conducted on board our vessel, where he seemed to think he should have a safer stage to play his part upon. And as there was nothing to be said in opposition to this, the merchant led the way, and the brave *chinovnik* followed, accompanied by his troop of peasants.

As soon as we were all on board the vessel, the fellow peremptorily demanded the passports, and the papers descriptive of our cargo; and upon seeing these he pretended that he found every thing irregular with respect to the cargo; and he now caused the peasants to derange all our well-packed goods, pocketed the papers, and stopped the vessel yet more effectually, by ordering some among his train of attendants to carry the oars on shore, besides sending to prison one of the crew who had ventured to make some observations concerning the proceedings that were going on.

By this treatment, we were detained until ten o'clock the next morning, when we were released by this precious magistrate, who was now sufficiently master of himself to regain his respect for the laws, which he had so wantonly outraged.

I must further add, that every one to whom the account of this affair was related thought it the luckiest thing in the world that I did not strike the magistrate; for, in case the fellow had uttered any thing that might have seemed a definite command to take prompt vengeance, which it was believed he was very likely

in that case to have done, the Yakoute peasants that surrounded him would not have hesitated a moment to knock out my brains. Future travellers in Siberia, therefore, ought to beware of an encounter with any *zasidytell* that they may chance to find upon the banks of the Léna.

CHAP. XV.

VOYAGE DOWN THE LÉNA—*continued.*

Pass the Entrance of the River Vintim.—First southerly Wind.—Chamarinskaya.—Cross the Line of Sixtieth Degree of Latitude.—Villages.—Remarkable Contrivance to counteract the Effect of a Head Wind.—Mountainous Country.—Tchookhea (the magnificent).—Grandeur of the Scenery.—Varied natural Objects of Grandeur.—A very rare Novelty in natural Scenery.—The River Ora.—Superstitions connected with this Part of the River.—Picturesque Reaches.—Recross the Line of the Sixtieth Degree of Latitude.—Change in the Aspect of the Country.—Yakoute Settlements.—Canoes of the Natives.—Visit to Yakoute Huts.—Painful Condition between that of the Wild and that of the Civilised Man.—Some Tungouse Natives.—Russian Mode of civilising the Natives.—Semi-savages at Olekininsk.—Beggars.—Meeting with Lieut. Rosinburg.—His Opinions of the Adventure at Vintimskaia.—Mammoth's Teeth.—Sterlet.—Change in the Face of the Country.—A Tempest.—Effects on the Crew.—Great Change in the Temperature of the Air.—Character of the Climate.—Granite Rocks.—Change in the Character of the River.—Brilliant Appearance of the Heavens at Sunset.—View of Yakoutsk.—Arrival.

IMMEDIATELY opposite to Vintimskaia the River Vintim falls in a fine bold stream into the Léna; and as the great river does not here become broader, the force of the current is considerably augmented.

We had on this day the first southerly wind that favoured us during our voyage, accompanied with rain. The land on either side of the river was here lower than any we had seen for some days, and a greater quantity of snow appeared upon the country, especially on our right hand; and there was but little diminution

of the cold. During the night we passed the village of Chamarinskaia.

The next day we crossed the line of the 60th degree of latitude; and although the sun at this season in this parallel is still near six hours below the horizon, it was hardly dusk at midnight. Our course was here easterly; and the wind, which had changed to that direction, was now colder than we had before felt it at any time since we embarked. The face of the country was here similar to that through which we had passed upon the preceding day, shaded with the deeper green foliage of the several varieties of the firs of more stunted growth; and the snow and ice were in the usual quantities.

In the middle of the day, we passed by the village of Bagajarinskaia. In the afternoon, the wind was sufficiently strong to impede our progress considerably, until a contrivance of the mother of invention to counteract its effects was thus constructed and employed. The boatmen rigged a large square frame, composed of poles of about ten feet in length, by which was held extended a closely wrought net. At two of the corners of this were tied large stones, and at all the corners were attached the ends of ropes, which led to a larger rope at about twenty feet from the frame, precisely after the manner of the logship and line. This frame was now thrown into the stream, and one side of it sinking by the weight of the stones at two of the corners, placed it exactly in the position of the logship when overboard, with its upper edge even with the surface of the water. And now, while this drifted with the current, wholly unaffected by the wind, as the line was paid out, it discovered to us that we were losing, by the counteraction of the wind, about a verst and a half an hour, or, in other words, stemming the stream through this opposition of the elements, and drifting that distance

less by the land during the hour than the current was running. But, upon making the rope fast, the frame instantly acted like a propelling force against the wind, and appeared nearly to negative its effects. A sail, or a few yards of canvass would doubtless have obtained, for us all the advantage we received from the invention, even better than our net.

Towards evening we approached a more mountainous country; and during the period of the dim light, in the short absence of the sun, we passed through a strait, which the navigators of the Léna have rightly named *Tchookhea*—the Magnificent. The natural objects here present the most striking of all the scenes which this mighty river exhibits. I saw them, unfortunately, but imperfectly; for I was not previously informed of our approach towards any thing remarkable, and I was sound asleep when we passed through the grandest portion of the strait. Happily, however, I rose by accident, while we had yet a distant view of the remarkable objects by which it is formed. At the distance of ten or fifteen versts, by full daylight, it appeared like a vast rent in the range of mountains, which are here composed of granite rock. But this distance was too great to observe it from, to admit of the spectator speaking confidently of the breadth of the passage, or of any thing further concerning it.

The whole country, indeed, at this part of the Léna is magnificent in the extreme. It resembles some of the grander passes of the Rhine, near the sources of that river, with the advantage to the spectator, who may be navigating the Léna, of floating upon a far mightier stream. In some places, indeed, appear the boldest and most picturesque scenery that may, perhaps, be any where beheld, bordering any river in any land. The most striking that I saw to advantage was at the mouth of the River Ora, which falls by a

narrow channel, between high and precipitous rocks upon the left bank, into the parent stream. It was such as we think we could gaze upon for ever. But there was a novelty which formed a portion of it, of a very rare kind among the natural objects that mountain lands exhibit. The mother of the arts was here seen rather as a copyist of the works of men's hands than as the model to guide them. Perhaps Nature has no where produced any thing more nearly resembling the works, of men than the prodigious rocks with which she has here bordered and overhung this great river. I was for a minute or two deceived, and believed we were looking upon the remains of the architectural works of some race of our species that might have inhabited the land, when the great mammoth trod the firm earth of the country, at this time watered by the mighty Léna. The appearance, indeed, which is here presented of architectural ruins has so near a resemblance to many remains of the productions of the earlier ages of European history, that they will excite the wonder and interest of every traveller who beholds them. We seemed to look upon a vast fortress with several towers, one of which appeared even circular. The proper walls of the place, overhanging the water of the narrower stream, seemed to be supported by artificial stone work, resting upon jets or steps of the rock; and upon the side of the land, as far as the seeming walls were not hid from the view, was seen even the appearance of a lofty gate. Nay, even loop-holes appeared to be pierced in several parts of the walls. If a race of genii were dwelling up this romantic river, and had been occupying themselves in constructing works in imitation of our ancient fortresses, they could not be said to have been unsuccessful. There is, indeed, a traditionary legend among all the native races in this part of Siberia, con-

cerning this particular spot of the Léna, which relates that the banks of the Ora are inhabited by certain spiritual beings, whose will has great influence upon the destinies of men. Thus, all the navigators of the great river, who thread this pass when the season will permit, stay and bathe in the Ora, or at its mouth, which is thought to be complimentary and highly pleasing to the spiritual inhabitants of the vicinity.

I cannot help here confessing a weakness, that possessed me at this particular epoch of our voyage. This was a strong inclination to contemplate, and dwell on the thought, of some day returning to make a home of some ravine among these rocks, here to dwell and pass the remainder of life alone, or with the Tungouse tribe of natives, far from all the ills that we know man, in civilised life at least, is heir to. And although this might be to fly to others we know not of, that may be greater, I am able to say that I have seen much of the way of life of the Indian, and I believe his condition, generally, to be less subject to the severer ills than that of the greater portion of civilised men.

The views every where, near these grander passes of the Léna, were on all sides most magnificent. Rocks of all forms composed the summits of the mountains: deep green verdure covered their less elevated steps, and filled the valleys, which opened and closed to our sight as we swept rapidly down the current; and a line of sparkling ice bordered each shore, only broken at intervals by the passage of the waters of some tributary river into the parent stream.

After passing through the reaches which presented the boldest and most picturesque scenery, we observed less snow upon the hills, and none upon the lower lands; and there was less ice in the river. There was

also now some diminution in the force of the current by the increase of the breadth of the stream.

We had during this day been making a south-east course, until, after re-crossing the line of the 60th degree of latitude, towards evening, we attained a great elbow in the river at which the stream again turns to the north-east, to pursue its proper course towards the Arctic Ocean.

This point, at which the river turns, exhibited the most agreeable views, among those of tamer interest of any we saw upon the Léna. The right bank, which is, as usual, the highest, is here formed by a very gradually rising piece of ground, which was cleared of all trees or shrubs, and seemed laid out in pasture. Two houses were to be seen, each of which appeared to be occupied by the possessors of one half of this portion of reclaimed land amid the wastes which the shores of the river generally present.

The next day we entered the proper territory of the Yakoutes. The Yakoutes are the people the most remote from the seats of civilisation of all the semi-barbarous settled tribes, that have been in reality subjected to Russian dependence and received any of the benefits of regular government.

About mid-day, we were passing a lower country than usual, where there was less snow to be seen upon the hills than we had hitherto observed, and less ice on the shores of the river. Soon after this hour, we passed a scattered settlement of Yakoutes upon a tract of low pasture ground.

The first of the Yakoute race that we saw in their proper country were a few fishermen, who came alongside to offer us some sterlet. The men appeared to resemble the Bouriats in feature, and they are doubtless of Mongul origin. They have very little beard. But it was particularly remarkable, that all those we

saw on this occasion, though I did not afterwards observe the same thing general among the tribe, had elongated and pointed chins. As to clothes, though it was cold, they had no more than some strips of hides partially covering their bodies. Their canoes afforded myself, at least, much interest, from their resemblance to those of the American Indians. They were formed of birch bark, and, save a little variation at the extremities, were precisely similar to those of the Mohawks. They were the smallest, however, that I ever saw, and they carried each but one man, who managed them with a kind of double paddle. When he impelled his frail bark, he held this in the middle, and dipped the two ends, which were formed alike, alternately in the water. We saw afterwards, however, some canoes belonging to these people, which were formed of single logs, like those nearer the sources of the river.

Late in the day, we encountered so strong a wind, that, although it blew across the river, deprived us of all the power we were accustomed to obtain by the oars over the boat's drift. We now resorted to our frame and net above described, by the aid of which we passed safely through several reaches. At length, however, the violence of the gale overcame all our efforts, and we were driven on shore for the first time by the wind, since we embarked, upon a low bank, which bordered a swampy tract of country, over which were scattered a number of the log huts of the Yakoutes.

None of the huts that formed this Yakoute settlement were near the shore, nor were any of them easy to approach. The whole tract of land upon which they stood had been lately inundated, and was still wet and soggy; but, as I was anxious to see some of the dwellings of these people, I set off, accompanied by one of our crew, who was a Yåkoute, and who loaded himself with empty bottles, which he hoped to bring back

filled with milk. After passing over half a verst of wet ground, covered with the decayed grass of the last year, we came to the nearest of the houses, where we found a family, consisting of an aged couple, some young women and girls and boys. They were a very little better dressed than the fishermen we had seen, and in the same material, and were all seated upon the ground round a small fire in the centre of the hut. The old man, as we entered, saluted us, and appeared pleased at our appearance, and requested, by signs and speech, that we would seat ourselves upon a mud bench that was by the wall on one side of the hut. This we declined doing, however, as we did not know how soon the boat might be able to proceed; and my Yakoute companion informed him, that we were only come to purchase some milk, if it was to be procured, and to pay for which we had brought with us some tobacco.

He told us, however, that his cattle were all astray in search of the young grass that was already springing upon the drier lands in the rear of the settlement. And all he had to sell us was some sterlet, which had been caught the day before, and which, as we had plenty of the same fish on board, we did not purchase.

Nothing could be more wretched than this Yakoute dwelling. It was a mere log hut, with a few poles laid across, over which sheets of birch bark were spread, forming a flat roof, in which an opening was left in the middle for the smoke of the fire to escape. Many of the houses of this people are of mud, and some have picket walls, bedaubed with mud, and banked up outside to four or five feet high with the same material.

There could hardly be a better illustration than this hut and its occupants afforded, of the painful character of the earlier stages which usually conduct men from a state of absolute barbarism to the con-

dition we call civilisation. The life of the wild man may be regarded as a dream, and the earliest stage of his social existence may be compared to the first moments of consciousness, when we awake from sound slumber and when the realities of life have not yet blotted out of the memory the impressions engendered in sleep. His visions of free thought and independent action have passed away, and his understanding is confounded by his imperfect conception of every thing around him, and his spirits are depressed by comparing his condition with that of men with whom he is associated, but with whom he has little or no sympathy. Moreover, his arm has lost its power to provide for his subsistence, through his ignorance of the arts with which his new mode of existence renders it necessary he should be acquainted. Nor would a similar comparison be wholly inapplicable to the condition of the mass of the peasant class of the Russo-Siberian people. The condition of the simple peasant, whose repose has not yet been disturbed by the first stages of education, or by contact with the inhabitants of the towns, is abundantly tranquil; but no sooner is this broken by commerce of any kind with the other classes of the people, than he is found shorn of all his original virtue, without having acquired any just impressions of the obligations which men owe to one another in society.

There was nothing of sufficient interest to keep us ten minutes in this Yakoute hut; and we did not visit a second. The distances between the dwellings were great, and the passage from one to the other was rather too much to undergo for the possible purchase only of a mere luxury such as that of which we were in search. We saw several cattle, however, grazing at a distance, among which were probably the old man's cows. There were also several horses, that appeared to be searching for the young grass beneath the decayed remains of the

last year's growth. And all of these were perfectly white, which, indeed, is the universal colour of the horse in the Yakoute country.

It was near midnight when the wind sufficiently abated to admit of our proceeding on our voyage. But it was perfect daylight as we launched again into the stream at this hour. Not a star was visible; but the sky, from the very ridges of the dark hills in the north-west, up to the zenith, was beautifully tinged with purple and red. And, as it now fell calm, we again rapidly advanced; and before eight o'clock in the morning, we had once more passed beyond the latitudinal line of the 60th degree.

The next morning several canoes came alongside with some fishermen of the native tribe of the Tungouse, none of whom we had before seen. But, as a better opportunity will occur to speak of this tribe, it will be sufficient here to observe, that whatever may be their origin, the most remarkable circumstances connected with their mode of life and condition, are the vast extent of country through which they wander, or in which they sojourn at different seasons of the year, and their docile character, which enables them to dwell where they will, unmolested by the Russians, or by the Yakoutes, or Bouriats, or any other tribes of more settled habits than themselves. They may be said to have not yet awakened, from the wild man's healthful slumber, to the painful experience of the degradation incident to the first stages of society. Happy, however, is it for their future prospects, that the terms of the Russian contact with the wild man are free from the ferocity of that of the Spaniards, and from the uncompromising character of that of the English, both of which, by different means, have led to the extinction of whole nations, even in some instances so completely as to have established very

generally, though, let us hope, very falsely, an impression, that every nation must perish, when brought into contact with another in advance of it in its social institutions.

The canoes of these Tungouse were like those of the Yakoutes. The men we now saw were slighter made than the Yakoutes, and bore a far greater resemblance to the Indians of North America than to the Tatar races of men. Yet it is remarkable that they resemble more the Indians of the eastern coast of America than those of the western coast, as far, at least, as my observation in that hemisphere has extended, which, indeed, has been chiefly among those of the eastern coast. Those we now saw wore deer skins, and were much better dressed than any of the Yakoutes we had hitherto seen.

The next morning we reached a considerable village called Olekininsk. We had a few goods to deliver here; and as it happened to be the residence of a *zasidytell* and a *gorodnichii*, it was of sufficient dignity to oblige us to perform ceremonies enough to cause us two hours' delay.

During our detention here, I took a walk through the place, tolerably secure, that there could not be another *zasidytell* like the one of Vintimskaia upon the banks of the same river. The inhabitants of this village are composed, about equally, of Russo-Siberians and Yakoutes; and they appeared to be the most ruffianly set of fellows that we had yet met with. A party of half-naked men were in one place quarrelling over the carcase of a cow they were cutting up, and others were lounging about in groups, as if they had no proper occupation. But the sight the most novel was that of four or five beggars, who were the first that might be properly so called, and the last that I saw in Siberia. They were petitioning the parties

that were quarrelling for some of those parts of the carcase that we are wont to throw to the dogs. Certainly, however, the condition of the pope of the place, whom we happened also to see, and who was the fattest of all the holy men I remember having seen in Siberia, the good *Khomba Lama* excepted, did not indicate this poverty to be universal. Among the women that appeared, and which may be mentioned as a novelty, there was one of considerable beauty.

Shortly before we left this place, Lieutenant Rosinburg, of the Imperial navy, arrived in a similar vessel to that by which we were descending the river. I have not before mentioned that I had the pleasure of making this gentleman's acquaintance at Irkoutsk. He was now proceeding with his wife to Ayan, a port upon the coast of the Ochotsk Sea, in which the Russo-American company have lately founded an establishment, in order to join a ship to arrive from Sitka, the seat of government of the Russians in their American possessions. He had heard in his passage down the river of the conduct of the *zasidytell* of Vintimskaia, and had been so annoyed by the circumstance, as to write immediately an account of it to the governor-general at Irkoutsk. "It was the luckiest thing possible," said the gallant sailor, "that I did not happen to arrive at the time of the occurrence; for, had I been there, I should have forgotten the respect due to office, and have thrashed the fellow into a stock-fish."

I could not help agreeing with the lieutenant, that it was certainly very fortunate that he did not arrive in time to make such a terrible example of the unfortunate man. But I will take this opportunity to remark that, wherever I afterwards went, I found the same feeling prevail, and the same disgust expressed, at the conduct of the drunken magistrate. In general, however, it was thought that it was better that the affair had closed

as it did, than that the man should have been so severely threshed.

Early the next morning we passed Marchinskaya. Several of the people of this village came off in canoes, to offer for sale some huge teeth of the mammoth, which were the first remains we met with of that mighty habitant of the ancient world — of the animal that, should the skeleton at St. Petersburg perish, and all the ivory remains of his species be one day worked into ladies' trinkets, will no doubt pass for a fabulous creation of men's imagination before the dawn of natural science, and the date of the first records of proper natural history.

I must mention that we heard here, though the circumstance may perhaps be known to the naturalists of Europe, that all the ivory teeth or tusks that are discovered, at least at this part of Siberia, are found standing directly upright in the ground. Whatever speculation this circumstance is calculated to suggest, it seems at least to indicate that the animals perished by some sudden change in the condition of the material substances amidst which their remains are found. Some of the natives informed us, that the imperishable portions of the remains of these animals exist in such abundance in the islands of the Arctic Sea, off the coast of Siberia, that the very land seemed as if they were composed of them.

Soon after passing this village, we met some more Yakoutes in their canoes, fishing. The sterlets were here so plentiful, that we bought of one party, thirty of them of the size of small cod-fish, for about a pound of tobacco, and again, five more as large as moderate-sized cod, for six or seven pounds of rye flour.

The snow and ice had gradually diminished since we passed by the higher lands, and we now observed very little of either. The river and the face of the country

had also much changed. The river had become broader and less rapid, and the hills were lower, and the valleys of greater extent. In several places promontories of picturesque form, and partially covered with stunted firs, jutted out beyond the ordinary line of the shore; and by the winding of the stream, these appeared gradually to close and open, which sometimes gave to the scene the appearance of a lake, and at other times presented a perspective, resembling that which the succession of reflections from mirrors placed opposite to each other, presents to the eye in a large apartment.

It was calm during this day, and we had the same scenery until the evening, when the weather, which had been, with the exception of a few short periods of strong winds, remarkably serene since we embarked, changed over our heads to a tempest, but without causing any agitation of the air beneath. Dark clouds now seemed to roll against one another by the force of the opposed currents of air, and forked lightning flew across the sky at an elevation that seemed scarcely higher than the hills, and loud peals of thunder burst over our heads, and resounded from hill to hill through the still air, with terrible evidence of the mighty power possessed by the material elements of our planet, which seem at such a moment as if they had broken loose from the restraint imposed upon matter by established laws, and were about to reduce the beautiful order of nature to original chaos.

While this frightful state of the elements continued above our heads, not a drop of rain fell, and none of our men put themselves under shelter. Thus an opportunity was afforded to mark the effects of the storm upon the men of the several races, of which our crew were composed. The Russo-Siberians were seized with religious awe; and they fell upon their knees and remained

perfectly still, and said their prayers inaudibly, and continually crossed themselves. The Tatars seemed but little affected. The Yakoutes fell upon their knees in the same manner as the Russians; but instead of making the sign of the cross, they covered their faces with their hands and bent their heads upon some packages by which they knelt. And this little difference in the effect of the storm upon the Russians and the Yakoutes I was the more particular in remarking, because, as the latter crossed themselves after the manner of the Russians before every church as we passed by it, I did not suppose that any difference in their manner of expressing their feelings would upon this occasion have been observed. This, however, was not the sole evidence that fell under my observation, as will hereafter be seen, that although they may be very loyal subjects, and very obedient to the laws, they are not yet thoroughly subjected to the spiritual influence of the religion they outwardly profess.

At length the rain came down in torrents, and the storm, without a breath of air having been perceived upon the water, now passed away, leaving a degree of warmth in the atmosphere such as we had not felt until now.

The day after this, we had the same scenery as upon the two preceding days; and the weather was so fine, and the temperature so much changed, that it seemed as if nothing were now wanting, but the full-blown leaves of the birch groves, to establish the summer.

This change in the weather so truly characteristic of the climate, recalls to the memory the seasons that have passed since the commencement of these travels in Siberia, and upon which a few remarks may be now made with more confidence than they might have been offered upon any previous occasion.

It is commonly said of those countries which are

situated in high latitudes, that they have but two seasons. If we there estimate the four periods into which we divide the year by their several lengths, in proportion to the duration of the same season in the more temperate climates, it would scarcely be less erroneous to say, that the Siberians know but one season, than that they enjoy less than four. The four seasons, in fact, in all the inhabited portions of this country, are as distinct as those of any other country within the same zone. If, however, we compare them with those we experience in this country for instance, we may say that the winter there embraces nine months out of the twelve, and that two months only may be called summer, and we shall thus leave but one month for the seasons of spring and autumn. But if we consider the spring to commence with the first signs of reanimation in the vegetable world, and autumn to end with the fall of the last perennial green leaf, then we must deduct a month from the long winter, which we ought, however, to add to the summer, without giving a day more to the seasons of autumn and spring.

It was some time previous to this, as has been mentioned, that the first indications of the spring were to be seen among the groves of birch trees in the sheltered valleys by which we were drifting. Nevertheless, the heat until this time had not exceeded 8 or 9 degrees. But the change in the temperature was now so great, that the thermometer stood at 14 or 15 degrees, and the rays of the sun at mid-day were absolutely hot. We had embarked with the very first breaking up of the ice, upon the ninth of this month; and had indeed but a few days afterwards observed the first appearance of the green leaves, and upon this the 28th day of May of the time we are keeping, and the 9th of June of our time, we experienced the first day of summer thus characteristically established. Yet some snow was

still to be seen on the declivities of every hill, and some ice along the shores of the river, though it was hourly diminishing in quantity.

Another characteristic of the climate of Siberia generally, is the prevalence of a serene state of the atmosphere. Three especial exceptions only to this apparently general law have been mentioned up to this time during these travels, and two of these occurred where the places themselves are exceptions to the general character of the country. During almost the whole of the rest of my sojourn and travels in this land, whatever was the temperature of the air, or even the appearance of the sky, still the calm state of the atmosphere commonly prevailed; and this often during some of the heaviest falls of snow.

About mid-day we passed the village of Oimouranskaya, and in the evening that of Sineskaya. Here the river became between six and seven versts in width, and was full of low islands covered with small birch trees, while the shores were rocky and precipitous.

After this we floated between rugged hills, where needle-formed peaks of granite rock were observed shooting up between the dark firs, and presenting a most novel and picturesque scene. Early the next day we passed the village Arinskaya. We observed more ice in the river here than we had seen for several preceding days; and we had a chilly wind until the afternoon, when, as the sun declined, the wind fell, and the atmosphere resumed its wonted serenity and warmth.

At eight in the evening, we passed the government post of Bestiatskaya, at the distance of just eighty-four versts from the place of our destination. The river had here still increased in breadth, and there were many low marshy islands at intervals, covered with the remains of the grass and reeds of the last summer.

On either side, the land close to the river was now lower than usual; but we observed a mountainous country at some distance upon the left hand, and a few hills at a greater distance upon the right.

Our rate of drift was now slower than at any time during the voyage, and did not probably exceed five versts an hour. During the early part of the night we passed some cliffs of sandstone, upon which were gathered myriads of swallows, that were the first of the birds of summer we saw during our voyage. But notwithstanding this tolerable assurance, that the change we experienced in the weather was not merely temporary, our advance towards the northern regions did not seem to be more rapid than that of the season, in respect to the effects of the temperature upon the vegetable world; for the green leaves of the smaller birches that flourish here, were not more forward than those we had seen in the valleys about a fortnight earlier.

The day after this, a dense mist hung upon the water all the early part of the morning, and obscured the coasts upon both sides from the view. During this state of the atmosphere, we drove against a low island, but this accident caused us only a short detention. By eight o'clock, the weather began to clear; and as our view extended, we found ourselves drifting among islands, so numerous that the shores of the river which were here generally low, were still not definable. In the middle of the day, however, we drifted by a high cliff upon our left hand. After this, the scene resembled that which is observed in some of the broader channels, but oftener near the entrances of several of the larger rivers of the world, such as the Rhine and the Nile. Many low islands of considerable extent appeared, with narrow channels between them. Later in the day, as the mists wholly dispersed, upon our right hand, there

was no appearance of hills of any considerable elevation, whether far or near; but upon the left, a chain of mountains of irregular forms, was apparent at the distance of thirty or forty versts.

As the night approached, while the sun was gradually diminishing his distance from the horizon, in his oblique and rapid course from the western point of the heavens towards the north, the spectacle was most gratifying to behold. So gradual is his descent at this season in this latitude, after the first three hours past noon, that as he now approached the misty peaks of the high land in the north-west, while we glided swiftly down the stream, he presented to us the appearance of a luminous globe that was rolling along the ridge of the mountains in the midst of volcanic vapours and terrestrial fires.

At length, we obtained the first sight of Yakoutsk. The town is seated within an inlet or little channel of the river, formed by a marshy island, and through which a very little current flows, and at the distance of about a verst from the main stream. All possible efforts were now made to direct our unwieldy craft through the channels between the islands we had still to pass, to gain the proper position required, in order to approach the shores before we might, by the force of the current, be swept beyond the town; and, early in the evening, we were near the prime object of our long expectation.

As soon as we were clear of the main current of the great stream, we landed a part of our crew, in order to track our vessel to the town. And now, late on the evening of the 1st day of June, or the 13th by our style, and the twenty-fourth day after leaving Irkoutsk, and the twenty-first from that of our embarkation, we moored in safety by the bank in front of the town of Yakoutsk.

CHAP. XVI.

YAKOUTSK.

Position of the Town.—Population.—Institutions.—Language.—Prospective of a Country that does not produce Food for its Inhabitants.—Commerce.—Fur-trade.—Character of the Inhabitants.—Facility with which the Russians mingle with the conquered Tribes.—Lesson for ourselves.—Conversion of the Yakoutes to Christianity.—Landing at the Town.—Promenade Description.—Antiquities.—Full Day at Midnight.—Arrival of Lieut. Rosenburg.—Dinner at the Governor's.—Company.—Retired Captain.—Romish Priest.—Swiss Lady.—Visit to Lieut. Rosenburg.—Preparations for their Journey.—Exercise on Horseback.—Terrors of the Journey.

YAKOUTSK is the capital of the department of the same name, which is the largest of the provinces of Eastern Siberia. It lies in the latitude of 62 degrees north, and beneath the meridian of 129° 40′ east of Greenwich. It is the most northern of the provincial capitals of Siberia, and is the place of residence of the civil governor of the department, and of an *ispravnik* and a *gorodnichii*. It possesses a population estimated at 4000 souls, composed of the mingled race of Russo-Siberians and Yakoutes, with a few pure Russians, who are chiefly officials in the service of the government and of the Russian Fur Company, and one or two merchants.

Of those institutions, which are the most important of all that properly belong to civilised life, the establishments for the instruction of the rising generation, there are at Yakoutsk only two very meanly appointed schools. One of these is, however, a general school, similar to the establishments in the larger towns, though it is without

the privileges with which the gymnasium of Irkoutsk is endowed. The other is a school intended for the instruction of boys designed for the church, and especially for the mission among the aboriginal inhabitants of this part of the country. But though the climate should for ever restrain the increase of the inhabitants of these districts of Siberia within limits too narrow to afford scope for the attainment of any high degree of refinement, even this little step in the right direction is gratifying to behold.

At the general school, there were at this time only twenty boys, and four or five girls, and at that for the clergy, only about eight or ten boys. At the former of these schools, nothing was yet taught but reading and writing in the Russian tongue, the language of the Yakoutes not having yet been sufficiently reduced to rules, to admit of its being studied by other means than practice and the ear. The scholars, however, at this school are chiefly Yakoutes and children of the mixed race; but those at the clerical school, are for the most part of the purely Russian race.

The Yakoute language, nevertheless, in all the ordinary transactions of life, is here greatly predominant over the Russian, and it is said to be easily acquired. The Russians, indeed, even those who are in the service of the government, and not permanently established, are fond of the language, and acquire it with that wonderful facility with which their fellow-countrymen in Russia Proper acquire all the polite languages of Europe. A lady, whom I shall have again to mention, willing one day to compliment my nation, as I am bound to suppose, after speaking of her progress in the predominant tongue at Yakoutsk, said, "The Yakoute language, I assure you, sir, is esteemed here just in the same manner that the English is esteemed at St. Petersburg." It might hardly have been polite,

when the lady's intention was taken into account, to seem to see any thing incongruous in the comparison.

But admirable as we must acknowledge to be every effort of men towards communicating the blessings they enjoy to those especially who remain still in the condition, probably, almost as low as that of the first of our species, it is impossible to sojourn among the inhabitants of this unfavoured region of our planet, and contemplate alone the fair side of the picture of their prospective condition. The country, which does not produce food for its inhabitants, without the application of a degree of labour wholly disproportionate to the results of the same labour elsewhere, must rise and decline with the increase and diminution of the accidental sources of its existence. We in England, indeed, though the comparison may not be much happier than that which has just been mentioned, although we are not fed entirely by the produce of our own soil, make up for the deficiency by a means which we hope will be perpetual, or endure to a period the most remote to which it may be the duty of finite beings to study the interests of posterity. The inhabitants of this part of Siberia are, indeed, in like manner, for the present, in some measure compensated for the privations to which they are subjected on account of the rigour of their climate, by the possession of an article of commerce in the produce of their forests. This source of their maintenance will, nevertheless, decrease in proportion to the increase of their numbers, and must finally fail them. By the fur trade, indeed, they mainly now exist; or at least by this trade, their condition has become superior to that in which the natives were found at the conquest of the country; and with its extinction, which the increase of inhabitants in northern Europe generally, and the consequent increase of the demand for the furs in which they clothe themselves, will sooner or later accomplish,

this cold region will cease to produce the means of maintaining men in sufficiently dense communities to admit of that state of society in any of its degrees, which we term civilisation.

Yakoutsk is at present the centre of the fur trade of Siberia, and is annually the depository of furs to the amount of upwards of two millions of rubles. Salt and talc are here also exchanged for merchandise consisting chiefly of such articles as those of which, it will be remembered, our cargo consisted.

Notwithstanding the somewhat heterogeneous materials which compose the population of this provincial town, to the eye of a stranger, the inhabitants appear to be almost wholly Yakoutes, on account of the features of the face, in particular, of that race being more distinctly marked than those which distinguish the proper Russians. The proportion of Yakoutes, however, of unmingled blood, does not exceed a quarter of the population. The mixed race, in the light in which they are chiefly seen by strangers, seem quite conformists to all Russian usages, though this is not in all things in reality the case. At their homes, and in their domestic affairs, and in their language, they are Yakoutes; while in their religion, and in regard to the social rights which they have been admitted to enjoy, they are not now distinguished from their fellow-subjects even of the pure Russian race.

Allusion has been before incidentally made to the greater facility, in comparison with other races, with which the Russians of the Sclavonic family mingle with the aborigines of the countries, which have been brought within the compass of their dominion. Evidence of this is to be seen in all parts of the Russian empire, but no where more clearly than in Eastern Siberia, and in no part of Eastern Siberia so remarkably as in this ancient territory of the Yakoutes. By this

happy disposition in the character of this race, many nations of different origin, which the vast empire embraces, have been subjected to the discipline which has rendered them capable of enjoying the advantages of equal laws and equal rights. Thus the conquerors have been saved from the stain on their national character which rests upon that of the Spanish name, and from the inconveniences which our pride of blood has occasioned us, and the empire from the internal wars which under any other state of things would have arisen, and retarded the increase of population, and the general diffusion of civilisation which, in the degrees we have seen, or are to see, have marched hand in hand from the Baltic Sea even to the Pacific Ocean.

But at the same time, while at Yakoutsk we find the best example of these happy consequences of this accommodating disposition of the Russians, it is here also, that in comparing the Russian conquest of the aboriginal inhabitants of the country with the conquests of other nations of which history affords us ample examples, we discover the more essential moral causes of the different results that the sequel of their several wars has produced. The Spaniards, whose conquests form the greatest contrast with those of the Russians, carried before them the cross, for which they opened a passage by the sword, and by worse means, carrying on exterminating war against all who submitted not blindly to their authority, and embraced not the faith which was to them a religion of blood with no other moral than that which recognised the right of the strong to commit every kind of violence against the weak. The Russians, wiser, and better endowed with the true spirit of the religion they profess, have carried with them also the same emblem of peace and good-will from Heaven towards man. But the means by which they have opened the passage for the symbol of their faith, and

by which they have planted it in new soils, has been justice and equal rights, for the firm establishment of which their tolerant spirit has been the pledge. Thus, while the Spaniards lighted the flames of war and hatred which are far from being extinguished even at this day, and afterwards converted to Christianity only in name, the feeble remains of the people whom they nearly destroyed, the Russians have by their humanity subdued and reclaimed whole nations of far more barbarous races than any which the Spaniards encountered, and added them to the number of which their empire consists, and to whom their laws and their protection extend.

Wheresoever, indeed, we find the Sclavonic in contact with any other race, we observe the mingling of the two people bear a due proportion to the advance of Christianity, and that advance also, to bear its proportion to the greater or less amount of the charity with which it has been promulgated, after making allowance for the degree of firmness with which the ancient religion of the people has been found established, and the proportion of good sense and absurdity with which it originally abounded. Thus, for instance, where the ancient faith has been found accompained with regular codes of scriptural law, and to have a regular clergy both studious and sincere, such as in the case of Islamism and also of Buddhism, of which the Tatars form the example of the first, and the Bouriats of the second of these religions, the conversions and mixing of blood have been slow; whereas, among those nations whose established religion has not presented any such rampart against the assaults of a purer faith, but has been found full of such abominations as men in all stages of civilisation wonder at observing in their own species, the rapidity of the conversions and the mingling of races has been proportionally greater.

In the case, indeed, of the conversion and adoption of this particular people whom we are now among, the world has seen, or at least history will record, a novelty of a very rare kind, and to which the traveller, though he is not in possession of sufficient information to enable him to speak with exactness concerning the formal proceedings by which it appears to have been accomplished, can bear testimony is a reality. It may be said, almost without a figure, that a whole nation of idolaters have been converted to the religion of civilised man by the decree of a Christian prince. The religion of the Yakoutes was mere idolatry of the grossest description, and the superstitions by which it was accompanied, were, in general, such as were not difficult to eradicate. But when the way had been prepared for this decree by the Russian popes, suddenly like a meteor, and which brings to our minds the conversions of Constantine and the apostle of the Gentiles, a ukase proclaimed that the good and loyal nation of the Yakoutes were thought worthy to enter, and were consequently admitted into the Russian Church, to be henceforth a part of the Czar's Christian family, and entitled to all the privileges of the rest of his children. Now although we cannot look into the seeds of time, and "say which grain will grow, and which will not," it is at least certain, that the Yakoutes have been ever since rapidly advancing towards that degree of civilisation which the country they inhabit may be supposed capable of admitting.

Not a doubt remains of the sincerity of the converts generally among the Yakoutes. We shall see cause, however, upon another stage of our journey to think otherwise of some that are removed from the example and influence necessary to attain the desired end. This, nevertheless, withdraws nothing from the principle which has been held to have governed the Russian

conquests, or of the fruits generally of which it has been productive.

In fine, if we are able to draw no other moral from a review of the past and the present condition of the Yakoutes, than that which the contemplation of the fruits of moderation and charity in religious affairs affords, we at least learn that no such law exists in nature as that which, when the Tungouse were mentioned a few pages back, was said to be supposed by some to govern the contact between a people in advance in the degrees of civilisation, and a race only yet in the infant stages of society. But perhaps to no people can such a lesson as that which is taught in the general history of the contact between the Russians and the barbarous races, be more useful than the English, who, "however we do praise ourselves," have stronger and more groundless scruples than any other people concerning the mixture of our blood with a race we deem inferior to ourselves.

As we landed at Yakoutsk, there were a dozen or two men and women gathered upon the shores of the little port. The costume of the men we observed differed very little from that of the Siberians generally, but that of the women was novel to us. The men wore skins, cut in imitation of the caftan, trousers, fur caps, and short boots of untanned leather; but the women were dressed in very short caftans, also of skins, with a border of the breadth of half the length of the skirt in scarlet cloth, and enormous bear-skin caps. They also had the short boots of untanned leather; but their legs were bare, like those of our Highland *men*.

The merchant and myself obtained apartments as soon as we landed, in one of the houses close to the bank, at which our vessel, doomed to be in a very few days converted into a house to shelter some Yakoute family from the winter's cold, was now moored. Our

quarters thus secured, and it being too late for business, we set out for a stroll round the town, full of the same agreeable feelings that most people, after a long voyage experience during the first moments of freedom upon *terra firma*, of the enjoyment of which they have been so long deprived.

We found the streets of the town laid out with the same regularity as those of the greater part of the towns both in Russia and Siberia, and the town divided into two nearly equal parts by a brook of not very limpid water, for which space enough, however, has been left for a fine river to flow, with a public promenade on either side.

We counted during our walk, six churches, all of which had been painted in the usual yellow and green, but none of them had much remaining of this mark to distinguish them from the ordinary houses of the town. There is also a convent here, with a church belonging to it; and there are some remains of an old Cossack fortress, which is said to have been erected by the conquerors of Siberia so long ago as 1647.

We found nearly all the town, save the building above mentioned, to consist of a sorry set of wooden houses formed of the materials of the craft which descend the Léna, which are broken up for that purpose as soon as their merchandise is landed; and, as none of them seemed to have ever been daubed with paint of any colour, they presented a sombre and miserable appearance. We only observed glass in the windows of one or two of the houses, which we afterwards found belonged to the merchants of the town, all the rest having merely small apertures where talc was used in the place of the more transparent substance. Many of the houses are enclosed within very high palings formed of the same materials as the houses, but which we could not discover were of any other use than the convenience they afford for confining the dogs.

Our tour was not performed without such labour and inconvenience as the novelty which the place presented was hardly sufficient to counterbalance, owing to the nature of the ground upon which the town appears to have been somewhat injudiciously built. The houses are nearly all, in fact, set upon a mere morass; and the snow which had lain upon this during the winter, had only lately melted; and the heat of the sun for the last two or three days had so dried the surface, while the ground beneath still retained its moisture, that an elastic crust had been formed upon it, that rendered walking most laborious and fatiguing.

In consequence of this inconvenience, we occupied more time in our walk than we were aware of, and when we returned to the shore, we found our men all asleep, though the sun was above the horizon. However, upon consulting our time-pieces, we discovered by the hour, that the ever-welcome source of light had just risen upon another day, instead of being, as we had supposed, just about to set upon that of our arrival. The sun in fact, at this season, in this latitude, disappears but for a brief time; and, as his lowest descent beneath the horizon, is not equal to that when we still enjoy twilight, there is no diminution of the full light of day at any time during the night; and as a bright and red sky had covered the whole northern quarter of the heavens during his absence, we had not missed his rays, nor had we any idea that we had commenced another day, until our attention was called to the time, and our watches indicated the hour of half-past one in the morning. Upon this discovery, we retired to take our necessary rest.

During the course of to-day, Lieutenant Rosenburg arrived with his family; and I had the satisfaction of hearing from him, that the little adventure at Vintimskaya had caused great regret to every one of all classes of the

people whom he had met since its occurrence. His own feelings upon the occasion have been already reported.

Upon the following day, I accompanied the gallant lieutenant in a visit to the government-house. We found the governor at home, and we met with the accustomed polite reception. The next day we dined by invitation with his excellency, and met the leading resident people of Yakoutsk, consisting chiefly of the *chinovnik* of the town. There was only one, however, of the company, besides the lieutenant, with whom I was able to converse. This was a Swiss gentleman by birth, and, I believe, an Israelite, but some time a captain in the imperial army, and now, in reward for his services in the wars in the Caucasus, promoted to serve the government in the capacity of post-master at Yakoutsk. I confess I thought this rather a strange reward for a soldier after a campaign, until I was informed, that when appointments of this kind are made, they are for five or three years only, and that they qualify those who creditably discharge their duties during that term, for higher employments in Russia.

There was also, at this dinner, a Romish priest, who had come from Irkoutsk, where he usually resided. He had been long accustomed to make this voyage every two or three years, to confess a small detachment of his widely scattered flock that resided here, and which only amounted to six souls. This was certainly to be deemed a meritorious example of devotion to that church, when it is considered how great must be the difficulties of the ascent of this rapid river, the smooth descent of which only has been described in the foregoing chapters. And when I conversed with the priest upon this subject, with the aid of a friend, I could not help recommending him to insist with the members of his little flock, as an additional motive for them to live without sin, that the sufferings which they

entailed upon another, were greater than the pleasure which their sins would probably afford them; or, if this were not likely to succeed, that some means should be tried to accomplish the important business by correspondence. The church whose priests are proud, when pride will advance their objects, and the meekest of mankind, when meekness will better effect their purposes; whose emissaries terrify the prince by their threatened anathemas, and flatter the beggar by their humility, and which boasts of its capability to adapt its institutions to every condition of man, might surely better accommodate itself to the circumstances of a country, of which it perhaps possessed no map at the time of the great councils and convocations.

The next morning, I called upon the captain above mentioned. He had, while at the Caucasus, married a lady of German descent, from whom I now met a polite reception. The lady was looking forward with much anxiety towards the moment when they might ascend the Léna, and return to Russia to enjoy once more the comparatively temperate air of their native climate, and meet again their long-parted friends.

The captain's house was a sample of the better sort of houses of the town. The dwellings at Yakoutsk of every description are warmed precisely in the same manner as those of the comparatively milder districts of Siberia. The chief variation in them consists in adapting the windows to meet the greater degree of cold which is here experienced above that in the towns where we have already seen so many precautions taken. The windows of the captain's house which looked upon the miniature port, and faced the south, were at this season of the ordinary size; but they were so contrived that, during the winter, they might be contracted to a round aperture of not above a foot in diameter, in which treble glass panes resisted the approach of the enemy. The houses

of an inferior class, however, have no other windows than similar apertures, in which talc supplies the place of glass in summer, and ice in winter. At the commencement of the severer season, pieces of ice from one to two feet in thickness, or, more properly, in length, cut into the right form, are placed in the apertures, and fixed quite firmly, by pouring water into the interstices, just as molten lead might be poured upon less dissolvable substances for the purpose of cementing them, and with the same effect.

In the houses of the inhabitants of the Russian race, this means of forming the windows is sometimes attended with a little inconvenience, on account of the heat kept up in the rooms causing the ice to drip. Such, nevertheless, is the intensity of the cold, that even when a room is heated to 16 or 17 degrees, the ice may remain dry. This, indeed, is no more than we see in much less cold climates, where the ice, as every one who has been in Canada in the winter time will remember, remains sometimes an inch thick on the windows in an atmosphere of equal temperature to that above mentioned. In the houses of the natives, the ordinary heat kept up, is not sufficient to take any effect upon ice of which a portion is necessarily exposed to the external air. About 8 degrees has been before mentioned as that in which the Bouriats delight in the winter time; but I was informed that the heat most agreeable to the Yakoutes at the same season was about 5 or 6 degrees; and, moreover, that when the thermometer was at the freezing point, they did not always take the trouble to procure artificial heat. It must be remembered, however, that the dresses of both these races are formed of the skins of beasts, and not of the produce of the loom.

No very brilliant light can of course be obtained at any time of day through such a medium; but, as

lamps are necessarily kept burning for twenty-one hours out of the twenty-four during the severer season in this latitude, the houses might almost as well be without windows as with them at that time.

I next made a visit to my naval friend. On arriving at his domicile, I found his wife and a child and two women servants preparing for their journey across the country to the ocean. Gospojah Rozuelung and her maidens were in dreadful spirits at the prospect before them. The lady herself, indeed, had been accustomed to long voyages and painful journeys; but the report of the character of the journey before them had quite subdued her wonted courage. The distance from Yakoutsk to Ayan, the new settlement of the company before mentioned, is about the same as that which we had to perform. But they did not calculate upon accomplishing their journey, on account of the character of their party, in less than sixty days, which would be more than double the time allowed for ours; and during the whole of this period they would necessarily be encamped in a desert and dangerous country. A well-armed man, indeed, on either side of each of the women and the child was indispensable, on account of the close character of the woods in many places, and the number and the fierceness of the bears, which rendered necessary the constant watch and guard of men whose quickness as well as coolness might be depended upon.

It may be easily supposed, that this new life for two months required some previous training; and for this purpose, the lieutenant had turned a spacious enclosure which was attached to the house in which he was lodged, into a kind of military riding-school, in which the party were now about to perform their first exercises. The lady had once been accustomed to horse exercise; but she had not mounted for nine years, and she was now very timid in sitting her horse.

The child was snugly stowed in a basket, which was lashed upon the horse's back. But the maidens of the party were the great difficulty. One of them had never been on horseback before, and she was now only placed upon her saddle to be taken off again weeping with terror, as well for the present as for the thought, no doubt, of the future; so that it was doubtful whether she would be able to attempt the journey.

At length, after very much ado, the rest sat firmly enough on their horses for a first trial; and, as soon as they had made a few turns round the court, the men of the party mounted also, and fell into the regular order of the future march. The lieutenant and a Yakoute, both armed, the lieutenant with a tomahawk and pistols, and the Yakoute with dagger alone, preceded the rest. After these came the lady and her child and the more courageous of the two maidens, guarded by Yakoutes on either side. And in this manner they moved on with slow and solemn march round the court, so sad and sorrowful, that they looked more like a cavalcade of the tired soldiers of some barbarian chief conducting a captive beauty with her maidens to a place of security, than a party training for defensive war with the wild beasts during a voluntary journey. The whole of the party, however, with the exception of the most timid of the maidens, who could not be persuaded to sit upon her horse that day, after an hour or two's practice, went very well through their exercise for a first essay.

CHAP. XVII.

YAKOUTSK—*continued.*

Weather.—Variations of Temperature.—Duration of the Frost in the Ground.—Suggestion concerning the Theory and Causes of the Variations of Climate.—Captain Parry's Voyages in the Polar Seas.—Apparent Eccentricity of the Causes that govern the Temperature of the Atmosphere.—Discursive Remarks.—Effects of the Elevation of the Land.—Influence of Proximity to the Sea.—Suggestions concerning the Influence of internal Heat.—Results of Experiments.—Suppositions concerning the Result of further Experiments.—Questions concerning the Equality of the Thickness of the Crust of the Earth.—Aurora Borealis.—Unequal Temperature of the Siberian Rivers.—Remains of Animals.—Hopes of finding our missing Countrymen.—Delay.—Last Visit to Lieut. Rosenburg.—Preparations of his Family for Departure.—Religious Ceremony before commencing a Journey.

THE weather had been extremely variable during the first days of our detention at Yakoutsk. Sometimes a scorching sunshine during the greater part of the day, was succeeded by a cold wind and rain in the evening; and the thermometer did not, after our arrival, indicate more than 11 degrees of heat, until the seventh of the month, when it rose to 13. On the ninth, it stood at 15 at eight o'clock in the morning, and at 16 at noon, and on the tenth at 16 in the morning and 17 at noon, with every appearance of settled weather.

From the time that I had heard at Krasnoyarsk of the perpetual duration of the frost in the ground there in particular situations, I was anxious to ascertain to what distance the cold penetrated in these regions

generally, before it was arrested by causes very different from the sun's heat. At Irkoutsk no one appeared to know more than every body knew at Krasnoyarsk, which was merely, that in all this part of Siberia the frost remained perpetually in the ground in places sheltered from the direct beams of the sun. At Yakoutsk, however, I was shown a well sixty feet deep, the water in which was never frozen, but rose at all times two feet from the bottom. This depth, therefore—that is to say, about fifty-eight feet—must be considered to be here the limit of the frozen ground. Now, although very little may be inferred from this circumstance singly, and though the truth may be very difficult to determine with exactness; yet, as the fact alone of the perpetual duration of the frost in the ground to most assuredly a considerable depth, is a circumstance calculated to throw light upon the theory of climate, a few remarks which it suggests may perhaps be made without any danger of their being uncharitably interpreted.

The excess of cold and its effects in Siberia naturally bring back to the mind of a traveller in that country, what he may have read with interest concerning the cold experienced by our navigators in the Arctic Sea. I remember when perusing the accounts of the voyages of Captain Parry in that sea, while residing in a cold climate in North America, being much struck with the proportionally small number of degrees in the difference of the cold between parallels of latitude so widely apart as that which I then inhabited and those of the observations of the navigator, and I have been no less so by the same circumstance while in this country.

I did not obtain any actual register of the degrees of cold and heat experienced at Yakoutsk during the year; and not being there at the season at which any

observations could be made concerning the cold, I rely, in the statement to follow, upon the best authority that could be obtained at the time I was there..

The temperature of the atmosphere during the winter, was a subject of frequent conversation upon almost all occasions upon which I met my friends, and especially at the government-house. There was at this time but one spirit thermometer in the place, but there had been at various times several others, and it was agreed by all who had ever taken an interest in this question, or made any definite observations, that there was during the severer months of the winter season here sometimes as much as 45 degrees of cold of Réaumur for a fortnight together, and that there was not unfrequently 48 degrees, and that occasionally the thermometer fell even to 50 degrees. It will be remembered that we are in the 62nd degree of north latitude, and under the meridian of 129° 40′ east of Greenwich.

Upon turning to Captain Parry's account of his several voyages in the Polar Seas, it will be found that the greatest degree of cold that he experienced during the first voyage occurred on the 14th and 15th of February, 1820, in Winter Harbour, Melville Island, in the latitude 74° 45′, upon which days the thermometer fell to 48 and 50 degrees below the zero of Fahrenheit.

During the first of two winters which he spent in these seas upon the second voyage, the greatest degree of cold that he experienced was 37 and 37½ degrees, which occurred in the latitude of 66° 15′ on the 20th and 21st of January, 1822. And during the second winter of the same voyage, on the three first days of January, 1823, at Igloolik, in the latitude of 69½, the thermometer fell to 45 degrees.

During the third voyage at Port Bowen, in Prince

Regent's Inlet, in latitude 73° 13′, the thermometer on the coldest day, which was the 12th of January, fell to 37° 5′.

If we now reduce the degrees of the scale of Réaumur to those of Fahrenheit, we cannot, indeed, fail to be surprised at the difference of the temperature of the two regions, in which the distinct series of observations were made.* The greatest cold experienced by Captain Parry appears by the above account to have been 50 degrees of Fahrenheit, although during two winters he did not experience more than 37° 5′. Now, upon the best authority that could be obtained, it has been above stated, that from 40 to 45 degrees of Réaumur is not an uncommon temperature at Yakoutsk, and that the thermometer sometimes even falls to 50 degrees of the same scale. Now by reduction of the degrees of the scale in use in Siberia to those of that used by our navigators, we find that 50 degrees of Réaumur is equal to 80½ of Fahrenheit, which shows the cold at Yakoutsk, in the latitude 62 degrees (supposing the information upon which I have relied to be correct), to be 30½ degrees of Fahrenheit greater than that of 74 degrees of latitude in the Polar Sea.†

* I have not been able to find any comparative table of these two modes of ascertaining the temperature that is graduated below 40 degrees of Fahrenheit and 32 of Réaumur, which are equal; but in the "Encyclopædia Metropolitana" will be found the following simple rule for reducing the degrees of one scale to those of the other.

$$R = \tfrac{4}{9} \quad (F - 32.)$$
$$F = \tfrac{9}{4} \quad R + 32.$$

† Since the above was written, the interesting and instructive despatches of Captain M'Clure have been published, and they remarkably confirm the principle which we are seeking to find established, for the purpose of making a few remarks thereupon, though the cold he experienced in lat. 74° 6′ 30″ was greater by 15 degrees of Fahrenheit, than the greatest mentioned by Captain Parry, which reduces our above excess of 30½ to 15½. These

In contemplating this great difference in the degrees of cold in these two high latitudes, the question arises, Whence proceeds this apparently so great deviation from the ordinary course of nature in the lower latitudes? The first suggestion, in answer to this question, which might probably occur to most minds, would proceed from the well-known inequality of the temperature of the atmosphere, in the same parallels of latitude, in the different longitudes, apparent in the most especial manner, between that upon the land and that upon the sea, but also in the variations upon the land, in proportion to the distances of given places from the sea.

The effects of this great inequality are chiefly seen in the temperate zone, in the variation of temperature between the eastern and western coasts of the two great terrestrial portions of the globe, proceeding from the prevalence of westerly winds, by which these coasts of both continents experience the influence of the higher temperature of the sea, across which the winds blow, even to a great distance in the interior, with sufficient regularity to render to a certain extent differences of longitude the same in effect as differences of latitude, wherever there are no especial causes, such as the elevation of the land and the course of other winds, to counteract the general effects of the prevailing winds of the same latitudes.

The elevation of the land, indeed, would be the next cause that would suggest itself for the solution of the difficulty. But this is very partial in its effects, and we know that there are no very high lands, of any extent

despatches add, moreover, a new proof of the constancy of the law of the lower temperature of the land compared with that of the sea by the captain's account that the greatest cold which he experienced was always with the wind S.S.W., which was off the land, and that the thermometer invariably rose when the wind was from the Polar Sea.

at least, either in the immediate district of Siberia, of which we are speaking, or in the places of the above observations in the Arctic Sea. When, also, we consider the well-known causes which explain sufficiently the difference of the temperature upon the coasts of the continents, and that of the countries remote from the sea in the temperate zone, we are naturally led to apply the same causes equally to the higher latitudes. Putting aside the former of these causes, and regarding the second and more probable, we are led to the presumption of there being an extensive open sea in the direction of the west, from the sites of the observations of our navigators. But we are here met by the well-known fact, that all the aqueous portion of the globe in the latitudes of which we are speaking, is covered with ice at the season at which the above observations were made. To other causes, therefore, we must look for this apparent eccentricity in the operations of Nature, in her arrangement of the different climates and the varied temperature of the globe.

Let us first then with this view, inquire whether it be yet established, that the temperature of the atmosphere generally, or of that of the different parts of the globe, is wholly dependent upon the great external cause, the solar heat, regulated and modified by the inclination of the axis of the earth, and the causes before mentioned, or whether sufficient discrepance be not apparent in the conclusions drawn upon this supposition to admit at least of great probability, that the climates and the temperature of the atmosphere of different parts of the globe are considerably influenced also by internal causes.

It is remarkable, that in observing the difference of the temperature between the higher latitudes of the southern and northern hemispheres, upon which the sun equally shines, we find that that which, for the

want of an equal proportion of land, we should, according to the seemingly established laws above mentioned, have expected to find the warmest, is in fact the coldest. Now many of the great natural philosophers, for reasons which we must accept, suppose that the solid substances which we find upon the earth's surface form only a crust of from thirty to 200 miles in thickness, over a mass of matter in a state of fusion. Nevertheless, though there should be no doubt concerning the state of the interior of the globe, the experiments which have hitherto been made, seem to be wholly inconclusive in respect to the equality of the thickness of the crust of the earth, on account of the contracted field of the experiments. The greater part of these appear to have been made in our deepest coal mines in Durham and Northumberland, where it has been observed, that the heat increases in proportion to the descent, at the rate of 1 degree Fahrenheit for every thirty-four English feet. Other experiments have however been made, particularly in the lead and silver mines in Saxony, where the proportion of increase of heat with the descent has been found to be 1 degree of Fahrenheit for every thirty-five feet. But in other mines in that country, it has been necessary to descend twice that depth for each degree of increase of temperature.

Now, our admirable Lyell in his great work on geology, after speaking of M. Cordier's having made the most extensive comparisons of the different results in different countries concerning the internal heat of the earth, makes these remarks: "M. Cordier announces as the result of his experiments on the temperature of the interior of the earth, that the heat increases rapidly with the depth; but that the increase does not follow the same law over the whole globe, being twice or three times as much in one country as in another, and that these differences are not in con-

stant relation with either the latitudes or longitudes of places. He is of opinion, however, that the increase would not be overstated at about 1 degree Fahrenheit for every forty-five feet." The same M. Cordier is of opinion that the heat of the earth's centre is about 160 times that of melting iron.

Let us now suppose, that the earth were penetrated in a hundred different places to an equal depth to that of the mines in which the experiments have been already made, or no deeper even than to the point at which the cold is first checked and begins to diminish, and especially in the higher latitudes of the two great continents. From this it can scarcely be doubted, would arise new data concerning the thickness of this covering of our burning planet: and if this were found unequal, then the variations of the temperature of the atmosphere might be found to be more or less influenced by comparative distances of different portions of the earth's surface from the grand internal heat.

Now, with regard to the probability of discovering that the crust of the earth is not in all parts of equal thickness, and the surface equally affected, let us make a further reference to the discoveries of science. The form of the earth, we are assured by the mathematicians and astronomers, is that of an oblate spheroid, which the greatest among them found to be the form that, by the established laws of nature, a chaotic mass, such as that of which our now beautiful world once consisted, would certainly take in revolving upon its axis. But it does not appear to have been shown by any natural philosopher, that the rotatory motion of the earth would necessarily cause either inequalities in the thickness of the covering of its surface, or render this invariable; or, which is the same thing, whether the portion of the earth which is still in a state of fusion be or be not, by

that or by any other cause, precisely of the form of the external surface.

Our great natural philosopher and astronomer, Herschel, in treating of the measurement and dimensions of our planet, calculates its deviation from the pure spherical form, by which it becomes that of an oblate spheroid, to be the $\frac{1}{300}$th part of its diameter at the equator, or about twenty-four miles; which will bring the surface at the poles about twelve miles nearer the centre of the earth than that at the equator. Now, if that portion of the globe which is in a state of fusion, should not be subjected equally to the effects of its rotatory movement, and should not have taken the same form as its external surface, the lands in the higher latitudes will of course be proportionally nearer the heated material which forms the great bulk of our planet.

If we suppose, then, as appears probable, that upon making more extensive experiments, it should be found that those portions of the earth's surface which enjoy so little of the sun's rays, rest upon a thinner shell than that upon which we tread in the temperate zone, we may reasonably conclude that the temperature of the atmosphere would be found to be influenced as well by internal as by external causes.

There is, moreover, a phenomenon, whatever its cause or effects, which may be placed in conjunction with that above mentioned. This is the aurora borealis. What is the cause, we will ask, and whence proceeds that light seen invariably in the north? If it be replied that it is electricity, we must demand again, How is it generated, and why always towards the pole of the earth?

Moreover, if we would further multiply references to unexplained phenomena, we might even name among others that great difference in the temperature of the rivers of Siberia which has been herein noticed.

And again, as a last suggestion concerning the cause of phenomena and known facts and their unknown causes, though not the least important of those that present themselves, let us ask, Who will explain why there are found in this region innumerable remains of animals similar in form to some, yet more prodigious than any, that now inhabit the torrid zone, and which lived since the last great geological revolution, as is evident from the substances in which or amidst which they are found? All those who have attempted to account for this region being once the country of the mammoth, have, for reasons which do not interfere with the freedom of our comparatively unimportant remarks, trod as gingerly at every step of their way, as reputation might walk upon the crust of a volcano of literary criticism; and their conclusions remain proportionally unsatisfactory.

Now, if amidst all this uncertainty concerning these several phenomena in regard especially to the past, it may be permitted to make a single step upon the tempting path of conjecture concerning the future, we would demand, Who is there among us who shall say that we may not by and bye discover our long-lost and regretted countrymen, for whom we have sought so many years in vain, surviving in a climate ameliorated by a great Polar Sea, and in a land producing some fruits of the earth yet unknown to us, and which nourish other organised beings of which we know nothing, even up to creatures similar—(and who dare conjecture more?)—to ourselves?

The merchant, upon whose movements I was in some degree dependent, was not yet ready. We had no cause, however, to regret this delay, on account of the condition and the character of the country through which we had to pass. Throughout a great portion of the way, we knew that we had to encounter many

obstacles to our progress, such as morass lands, bogs, and swamps, and rivers, and mountains; and this was the season at which the swamps could not fail to be full of water. Thus, as the weather was now fine, what we lost in time, we were sure we should gain in the decrease of the water in the swamps, which it was believed would be the greatest of the difficulties that we were sure every step of our arduous journey would, in one shape or other, present.

The kind family which had followed us upon the Léna, was ready before us. They had completed all their arrangements upon the ninth of the month, and were to commence their sad journey for Ayan, the place of their destination, upon the Sea of Ochotsk, upon the following day; and upon the morning of the tenth, I called to bid them farewell.

Upon arriving at Lieutenant Rosenburg's dwelling, I found his wife, and her child, and the young women that were with her, taking their last training lesson for their dreaded equestrian journey. The lady seemed to have regained the confidence she had anciently possessed, and the young women were now thought sufficiently improved in the skill and courage that were deemed necessary to admit of their commencing their journey with the good hope of happily concluding it. The courage, however, of the lady, though she had regained her firm seat in the saddle, was not quite heroic before the contemplation of the dangers inseparable from such a journey as that before them. The distance was above 1000 versts, and the country which they were about to traverse abounded in forest and morass land, similar to that which we had to encounter, without possessing any settled inhabitants; and it was so infested with bears, as to render all the precautions before mentioned, and constant watch, indispensable. Under the most favourable circumstances, they could not hope to accomplish

the journey in less than between fifty and sixty days, during the whole of which they would be struggling with the difficulties of the way by day, and encamped, be the weather what it might, in a frail tent by night.

But not to guides with pistols, daggers, and other weapons, which we have seen prepared for their protection, did this good family wholly trust for their security. According to the commendable custom of their country, they had fixed upon the hour previous to their departure, to invoke, with the aid of the chief pope of Yakoutsk, the favour and protection of Heaven during the arduous journey; and as the pope, with his assistants, was already in attendance, and the hour appointed for the performance of his sacred offices at hand, I willingly accepted an invitation which was given me to join in their pious duties.

When we were all assembled in the largest apartment in the house, the pope, with his assistants bearing the holy water and some other little appurtenances to Russian worship, took his place in the centre of the room, with the crucifix in his hand and his face turned towards the holy corner, in which a picture hung, while the rest of the party knelt; and in this so lately Pagan land, the simplest adorations of the Christian party were now sung, and their prayers offered up to Heaven for the safety of the travellers, and for the happy issue of their adventurous journey.

The service was in the Sclavonic dialect; but with such simplicity and feeling, and apparent neglect of the enforced ceremonies of the church, were the sacred offices performed, that the language in which the prayers were uttered needed not to be translated, to touch the hearts of all that were present. As the hymn especially, with which the service concluded, was sung, it seemed as if there were nothing wanting to the purity of the worship of our first parents, when

"they lowly bowed adoring" Him who out of nothing called them into being, or of that of men before they first bowed the knee before gods made by their own hands, or worshipped worse images of their imaginations.

When all our orisons were duly paid, the pope gave us his benediction with a most liberal sprinkling of holy water, of which I received my full complement, and of which I am bound indeed to say, that I was never upon such occasions stinted on account of my nation and religion, and that I never received less of any thing the church had to bestow by way of blessing, than the most pious Russian.

As soon as the touching service was over, the scene changed to worldly affairs, in the immediate preparations for the departure of the travellers; and I now took leave of my amiable friends, and an hour afterwards they set out on their perilous journey.

CHAP. XVIII.

JOURNEY FROM YAKOUTSK TOWARDS OCHOTSK.

Departure from Yakoutsk.—Yakoute Guides.—Passage across the Léna.—Commencement of the Land Journey.—Provisions.—Arms.—First Post.—Lakes.—Meadows.—Woods.—Gaiety of our Companions.—Sorrel an important Article of Food.—Crows.—A drunken *Smotritel*.—Remedy in Use.—Fine Weather.—Storm.—Curlew.—Solitude.—River Amginsk.—Swamp.—Islet in the Swamp.—Sufferings of our Horses.—Mosquitoes.—Squall.—Hut of Hexagonal Form.—Mode of passing Horses over a River.—Worse Swamps.—Ancient Causeways.—Sagacity of our Horses.—Ducking in the Swamp.—Another Sort of Oasis.—Remarkable Character of the Place and its Inhabitants.—The *Smotritel's* Account of himself.—Effect of the Place upon ourselves.—Continue our Journey.

On the evening of the 12th of the month, I took leave of the governor and the Russian captain, and upon the morning of the 13th, my companion of the Léna and myself set off for the place of our destination upon the Ochotsk Sea. The thermometer, that had on the 11th risen to 19 and 20 degrees of heat, and on the 12th to 21 and 22 degrees, with calm and clear weather, had this morning fallen, during a heavy shower of rain and a north-west wind, to 18 degrees.

At about eight o'clock, we embarked with our necessary baggage of tent and cooking apparatus, and some provisions, on our passage across the Léna, upon the opposite bank of which we were to meet the horses that had been provided for our journey. About mid-day we reached Tarmouska, about seven versts from Yakoutsk, where we found the horses awaiting our arrival. There was no habitation here save a Tungouse

wigwam, which was occupied by the *smotritel* who furnished us with horses, and was placed in the middle of a piece of meadow land a few acres in extent, which was surrounded by stunted firs, chiefly spruces.

We were detained at Tarmouska, in making our various minor arrangements, until two o'clock in the afternoon, at which hour we commenced our journey. No precautions appeared to have been neglected, whether for our security, or to enable us to obtain such comforts as circumstances might admit, or against ordinary accidents upon the way. We had five horses, three of which carried the same number of Yakoute guides and attendants, as well as our necessary baggage, the chief part of which was packed in small cases covered with hides, to keep out the water in which we knew we should be plunging, both in the swamps and in the rivers which we had to wade during our journey. But our beds, as they could not be conveniently stowed in a small compass and kept dry, and might tend by their bulk to impede our progress through the scrubby woods, with which many parts of the track abounded, we were obliged to abandon.

To make provision for the wants of nature in the way of food, had not been the least of our difficulties. Weight and bulk were here also to be considered, besides fitness for preserving in a state for use. This part of the arrangements, in particular, fell into the hands of my companion; but he was able to add very little to some bread in the form of biscuits, and a good supply of the dried ribs of mutton, that still remained of the stock which we had provided before leaving Irkoutsk.

Mutton thus preserved is an article of food much used by travellers in Eastern Siberia; but it has little to recommend it, beyond its extreme lightness, which is scarcely exceeded by that of cork, and its exemption

from the liability to spoil; or if we add, by its capacity to fill up the "aching void" in a traveller's stomach, this is the utmost that can be said in its favour. The sheep, generally, of Siberia, are very poor animals. In fact, after those we saw on our journey to Tomsk under the guard of the Kirgeeze, I met nothing worthy the name of the poorest species we have in Europe. Such as are to be had, however, are killed in the autumn, and the ribs are dried in the ovens of the Siberians, just as the stock-fish are dried by the Swedes and Norwegians in the sun; but certainly, however, with less success. Seamen, after laying a stock-fish upon the shank of the anchor, and thumping it well with a sledge-hammer or crowbar, contrive to make it somewhat palatable, however little it may contain of real nutriment; but our ribs of mutton, which were a very little thicker than sheets of parchment, were certainly not more agreeable to the taste, and had no more nourishment in them, than might probably be found in an equal weight of that article in case of a scarcity of better food.

With regard to arms, we were furnished much in the same manner as the party that had already departed. The merchant and myself carried tomahawks and fowling-pieces; but the Yakoutes, being accustomed to face the bear, the only enemy for which we might need arms, with the knives with which they cut their meat, which resembled large daggers, and were always ready, disdained the fire-arms with which we would otherwise have provided them, and, therefore, had no addition to their native weapon. Nevertheless, the way having been often travelled by the merchants' light caravans, and a great portion of it furnished with government stations, and some parts peopled by Yakoutes, who killed many bears annually, was less infested with these animals than the country between

Yakoutsk and Ayan, which had to be passed over by the interesting party of travellers whom we have seen making their necessary provision against all the dangers before them. Moreover, as the bears are never met with in parties, like the wolves, which are not found in this part of the country, we were sufficiently provided even to desire the occasional relief of a bear-hunt during the journey, rather than in a condition to dread any attack.

At the distance of two versts from the river, we found a drier soil than that which prevailed where we landed, but producing the same vegetation. Soon afterwards, we observed a few small birches and poplars mingled with the constant firs, and which we found increasing in number and size as we proceeded until we reached Talbyschtatscha, also a government post, at the distance of twenty-eight versts from the river. At this place, we found a *smotritel* snugly housed in a mud hovel, the floor of which was four or five feet beneath the surface of the ground; but, as we were determined to accomplish another stage before we reposed, we made no delay here.

As we proceeded, we passed along the border of a string of small lakes bounded by meadows of about half a verst in breadth on both sides; and we had yet nothing to complain of in regard to the state of the country for travelling. In the evening we reached Tegulinska, at the distance of fifteen versts further on our journey; and here we halted for the night.

We found at this post a Yakoute *smotritel*, who supplied us with a good mess of beef *stchee;* upon which, with the addition of some of our own biscuit, we supped heartily. When we had thus well satisfied our appetites, the Yakoute *chinovnik* conducted us to a small hut, adjoining that which he inhabited, where we laid ourselves down upon some dry benches formed of clay, for our

night's repose. We were kept, however, from sleeping, nearly half the night, by the merriment of the *smotritel* and our men in the other hut, who seemed equally entertaining to each other. But, by this time, we thought it better for the sake of all parties to arrest the flow of humour in which they were so freely indulging; and we summoned our chief guide, who came at the first call, and sent word by him to the rest of the merry party, that we wished them to postpone their stories and their mirth until we were asleep. After this, we had no more noise, and we slept tranquilly until the morning.

The next day, after breakfasting upon the same dish on which we had supped the previous night, we set off with fresh horses; and finding the same description of country, with a continuation of the same chain of small lakes, bordered with meadows and grassy slopes, that were perfectly dry, we encountered no obstruction, and reached the station Tshishikeiska, at the distance of thirty-two versts from that at which we had slept, at an early hour.

As far as the next post, Porotowska, at the distance of thirty-four versts, we passed over the same description of country, and had the same facility of travelling; and we found here a similar lodging to that in which we had passed the previous night.

Upon the third day of our journey, we set off at an early hour with fresh horses, and continued our way by the same chain of small lakes, which it was now quite evident were but the deeper parts of the bed of an ancient grand river, through which the current had ceased to flow, by the drying up of its sources, or a change in the course of the stream, or possibly by some geological phenomenon, such as the raising of the land caused by imperceptible volcanic action. Early in the day we arrived at the post of Tshuraptshinska, at the distance of thirty-two versts from that at which we had

passed the second night of our journey; and soon after mid-day, we reached Arilatska, at a further distance of thirty-two versts from the post last named.

Soon after quitting this post, we passed a little settlement of four Yakoute huts; and in their vicinity we met some children with baskets of sorrel; and we observed in the meadows around the huts several other children occupied in gathering the same green herb. Upon our making inquiry of the Yakoutes that were with us concerning the use made of this herb, they informed us, that it was an important article of the food of the inhabitants of this part of the country at this season of the year.

We saw, upon this day's journey, some crows of the species common in Western Europe, none of which I had before met with in any part of Siberia. In the evening we arrived at Lebeginska, thirty versts from the last post, which completed the longest day's journey that we performed, which was ninety-four versts. This was also the last of the unobstructed portion of the way.

The weather during our journey up to this time had been exceedingly fine, with the thermometer oscillating during the day between 16 and 21 degrees of heat. But during this afternoon, the sun was obscured; and a little before our arrival at this post, a storm of thunder, lightning, and wind commenced, which, before our horses were relieved of their burdens, was attended with such torrents of rain as to make us think ourselves fortunate in being under cover.

There were here a Yakoute hut and a Tungouse wigwam; and upon the merchant and myself entering the former, while our men were relieving the horses of their burdens, we found the *smotritel* and his man lying beside some expiring embers in the centre of the hovel, quite insensible from the effects of the precious *vodka*,

as it was very easy to discover by two bottles that were lying empty upon the ground beside them. We happened, however, to find also a bucket full of water in the hut; and the temptation to employ this, according to an improved means in use in the country for restoring the lost senses of drunkards when their services are required, being irresistible, we poured the whole of the refreshing element over their heads. But as the effect of this was not such as we expected, it was evident that the potations of the jolly couple were too recently swallowed to admit of our now fairly proving the general efficacy of this remedy for intoxication. A little sleep, indeed, before its application, is acknowledged to be as necessary to its success as repose to renew our bodily vigour after fatigue.

As our efforts to restore to their senses these doubtless very good men when awake and sober, were unsuccessful, and as we could find nothing in their hut to make use of, to save our stock of provisions for times of greater need, which we might expect to encounter during the journey, we contented ourselves with what we had; and after our supper, we laid ourselves down upon some dry sticks, arranged for benches, and we passed the night very comfortably.

The next day, which was the fifth of our journey, we left this station and its drunken inhabitants at seven o'clock in the morning, with fresh horses. We had passed the lakes before mentioned without seeing any of the fowl that dip the wing in water; and, up to this time, we had nowhere seen any other birds than the few crows above mentioned. But when we had made about four or five versts of the journey of to-day, as we skirted a small shallow lake in the midst of a narrow meadow, surrounded by a thick spruce forest, the voice of the curlew awakened our recollections of sunnier climes. Two of these birds, so familiar to all who

inhabit almost every land in the temperate zone, were searching for their food from place to place along the border of the little lake, which seemed as if it were the utmost bounds of the wandering of their species throughout the wide surface of the globe. We thought, at first, of trying to shoot them. But it seemed as if it would have been a crime to destroy one probably, and leave the other to mourn its mate through the season, and for the sake of the tithe of a single meal, which we had no immediate prospect of wanting; so we left them to the enjoyment of the unenviable solitude of the desert.

At about four or five versts from this lake, we encountered the first true sample of the difficulties of the way before us, in the form of a swamp, across which there appeared to have been formerly a causeway, but of which there were now, however, but few remains; and we had to wade pretty deeply in the water and mud to pass over it.

Soon after mid-day, we attained the next post, called Melgagiska, at the distance of twenty-seven versts from that at which we had last slept, and situated upon a drier soil. After this we had the same country of morass land and swamp, until we reached a river called the Amginsk, which is one of the tributaries of the grand river of Eastern Siberia. We crossed this river at a ford known to our guides without dismounting, and without any great inconvenience, although the stream was rapid, and the water up to the horses' chests.

We proceeded now along the banks of this river until we arrived late in the day at the next post, called Amginska, twenty-seven versts distant from the last. We found here a Yakoute *smotritel*, residing in a hut placed in the middle of a piece of pasture land, upon which several cows were grazing. Our men had given us hopes during the day that we should here sup upon

sterlet, with which this river abounds, but we were disappointed. The *smotritel* and his aid had neither hook, line, nor net, to procure any fish whatsoever. But we obtained both *stchee* and milk; and the latter, we thought, better flavoured and richer than any we had tasted in the more southern parts of Siberia. At this river we might consider, as far as distance was concerned, that we had made a good fourth of our journey, being now 284 versts from Yakoutsk, and 761 from the Sea of Ochotsk.

We quitted this post early the next morning. At a few versts from the banks of the river, which we now left behind us, we found ourselves involved in a deep morass, covered with underwood and full of water, in some places above the horses' knees. Our leading guide's anxiety about our passage of the complete bog, which we had now to encounter, was lest any one of the party should get astray from the rest, and perhaps be irrecoverably lost. In order, therefore, to keep us as much as possible under his view, or to enable us to meet again in case of separation, he selected a landmark that was distinguishable at intervals, consisting of some larger-sized trees than those which flourished generally throughout the swamp, and towards these it was arranged that we should all direct our course, whether we were in company, or apart, whenever we could perceive them. There was there too, he informed us, a little spot of ground, which was about mid-distance across this swamp, where we should be able to rest our tired horses.

Soon after mid-day, we reached within about a verst of this desired resting-place; but such was here the state of the swamp, that we were still two hours longer in winding and turning about to pick our way through the mire before we reached it. It was, however, a moment of real enjoyment to us, when our horses

stepped once more upon dry ground; and it could not have been less so to the poor animals themselves; but we knew how soon our pains as well as theirs were to commence anew. However, we removed all the burdens from the backs of our faithful beasts, in order to enable them to obtain as much rest as possible during our stay. For ourselves, we now prepared a little *samovar* that we had with us, that we might refresh ourselves with some tea. But as to the poor horses, rest was all the refreshment they were allowed. They were rigorously treated according to the system already mentioned as established in Siberia; and although they were most in need of food, as well as of repose, and while there was grass under their feet, they were tied to a tree and given nothing. Their sufferings, in truth, had been such as rendered ours, in comparison, beneath notice; for, independent of the difficulties of the ground, they had been teased continually by large horse-flies. Not that there was, however, any want of the flies that prefer human blood; but we had taken more care of ourselves, and were provided with the means of defence against their attacks. We had set off furnished with some close nets, such as are used in the country to protect our faces; and although these were very soon torn to pieces by the branches of the scrubby trees as we rode on, we always found some means or other of guarding ourselves against the inconvenience caused by these insects.

After leaving this little islet or oasis in the swampy wastes, we were overtaken by another thunder-storm, accompanied with hail so heavy, that we thought ourselves fortunate in discovering near us a morsel of dry ground with some trees upon it, of which we determined to take advantage; and we alighted here, and placed ourselves under the shelter of some thickly-sown spruces, until the storm, which was not of long duration,

abated. Upon this piece of ground, and upon several other similar spots that we passed by, as we waded through the water and mud, which became deeper and deeper as we proceeded, we observed the rose flourishing in full bloom. At length, at nine o'clock in the evening, after twelve hours of march, we reached the post of Nochinska, forty-seven versts from the River Amginsk, and situated upon another spot of dry ground.

The hut which we were put into to-night, we remarked, was in form hexagonal, and seemed to have been planned with so much care that it excited our curiosity; and we made an attempt to discover, by the aid of a spare vocabulary of their language which we had made before leaving Yakoutsk, why this novel form had been chosen for a habitation by men of this semi-barbarous race; and we seemed to learn, what we had afterwards the opportunity of observing, that this was the accustomed form of the huts of the Yakoutes in this part of the country.

The night was again tempestuous, with four or five hours of heavy rain; and thus we were a second time fortunate in reaching a place of shelter in good time. In the morning there was great hesitation on the part of the guides concerning our march, arising from the accounts which we here heard of what had been the state of the swamps in our advance before this storm. It became necessary to weigh all the bearings, and consider whether it were not better to remain a day or two with these Yakoutes, than to proceed immediately after this augmentation of the difficulties of the way. It was finally, however, determined that we should make the attempt to proceed.

Soon after quitting the post of Nochinska, we were involved again in the same difficulties as on the previous day. But after an hour's march, we came to the narrow

and deep stream of the River Anga, by the side of which there was a piece of dry ground, upon which stood a hut inhabited by a Yakoute, who kept a canoe, and aided those who passed by in crossing the stream.

Very little care had hitherto been taken to prevent the horses leaving us, when we were passing them across the rivers; but at this place the Yakoutes prepared to take more than their usual precautions, on account of the animals, as they informed us, knowing very well that they were in a country of fine rich pasture at this season, and of their having more than ordinary dread of this deep and rapid river, which rendered it not unlikely that they would attempt to escape as soon as they were unburdened and unbridled for the passage. The plan adopted to secure them, was to tie them together in a line. Then in this manner they were led to the edge of the stream, where they were given the word, at which they all walked into the water and swam to the opposite shore, where, after landing, they stood tranquilly until we had all passed over in the canoe.

After the passage of this river, we came upon another much worse swamp than any of those through which we had hitherto waded. This also exhibited some remains of ancient causeways. I never before witnessed any labour, or patient endurance of pain and fatigue on the part of any horses, that would bear comparison with the labours our poor beasts now performed, and the patience with which they endured their sufferings. The state of the swamps was here such that wherever we found the smallest remains of the former causeways, we took advantage of them. Such, however, was the condition of the greater part of these, that it was a matter of wonder to us to find that our animals preferred crossing them to keeping in the swamp. But it as-

tonished us much more to see the manner in which the intelligent beasts, which, happily, were not iron-shod, found means to profit by them. These causeways had merely consisted originally of three rows of stakes driven into the ground, upon which were laid three parallel lines of logs, across which poles were placed, fastened at their ends with pegs. But wherever any portion of them was remaining, there were not more than half the poles left, and the greater part of these were broken, and lying with one end in the swamp. Nevertheless, our intelligent animals contrived to get over them in a manner that seemed to indicate that they were stimulated by the knowledge, that the more ability they displayed in surmounting these difficulties, the less they would have to encounter of the swamp. Where the poles were broken, and not fallen, they never stepped upon the ends that projected; and when all was in ruin together, they would step upon the exact point of the crossing of such poles as were broken off near the opposite sides, and had one end each across the beam, and the other end in the swamp; and sometimes they would walk along the middle line of the logs, where there were a few ends left to form any kind of support for their feet. But it is impossible to describe all the means by which they contrived to take advantage of the little relief which they here found to their distressing labour.

During the greater part of the passage of this abominable swamp, which was about twenty versts in breadth, we found these remains of causeways on bridges of five or six hundred yards in length, at intervals of a few versts. Sometimes, however, they were wholly too bad to attempt; and at other times they were so high above the surface of the water as to be difficult to mount, and to suggest to us the superior prudence of keeping in the swamp. On one occasion, where it ap-

peared doubtful whether the horses could pass along some of these remains, one of the guides and myself chose to keep the swamp, while the rest of the party allowed their horses to take the other course. Observing, however, that the others appeared to be doing better than we were, and perceiving that my horse's inclination was for the causeway, as soon as I found a place where the water was a little shallower than usual, I gave the animal his will, and he managed to climb upon the frail way. I had, however, badly chosen the place for the experiment; and before the poor beast was able to extricate himself from the dilapidated remains of the logs upon which he found himself standing, he fell through them, crushing all beneath him, into the water and mire. But, fortunately for myself, I was thrown into the swamp, clear of the rafters and broken poles of the causeway; and, although pitched head-foremost in the water, I experienced no greater inconvenience than arose from a dirty cold bath, and a bruise of no great importance. One of the Yakoutes, however, experienced a similar accident with serious bruises, before we got through the same swamp.

Late this evening, we arrived at the post of Aldanska, where we found another dry oasis, something larger than any we had before seen. Besides the relief we felt at reaching this post as a place of rest, our interest was now excited by the peculiar character of the place and of its inhabitants. As we approached the dwelling of the *smotritel*, we observed a dozen horses or more, and about as many cows, grazing upon a rich pasture, which, besides the more cheering hope of the country before us which it excited, gave us assurance that we should neither want *stchee* nor milk for our evening meal, and for the next day at least; and as the bread, and every thing that we had brought with us, save some dried

mutton, was now exhausted, this was not a matter of indifference to us.

We found the official's house, two huts, and several cattle sheds, placed upon a spot of ground a little raised above the meadow, forming, as it seemed to us, quite a settlement. This *smotritel* proved to be a Russo-Siberian. He received us with hospitality, and set every body in his house to work immediately in our service, some to aid our Yakoutes in discharging their beasts, and others in preparing us a meal, and a third party in filling several tubs that stood near the door with clear water from a pool close at hand, that we might refresh ourselves by partial bathing.

Upon entering the good man's house, we found it to consist of several apartments, one of which, if we had been disposed for solitude, we might have appropriated to our exclusive use. But swamps, woods, and travelling, are not bad correctives to that sullenness which makes men in the civilised world think the grades into which they are necessarily divided, much more distinct from one another than they really are; and we preferred the company of all we could collect around us, to sulking morosely alone; and the intercourse which we now had with our host, gave us reason to congratulate ourselves on the choice we had made.

It happened that the merchant's caravan, which preceded us, as we now learned, had already lost in the swamps not less than twenty-two horses, but which the captain of the party had been able to replace here. This had taken so many of the *smotritel's* cattle, that he had some difficulty in providing for our wants. In the meantime, while we were necessarily detained, our host gave us an account of his family and his settlement, which I cannot omit to report.

He had been five and forty years upon this lonely spot of firm earth; and he assured us, that since his ar-

rival, he had never, either in summer or winter, crossed the swamps on either side of him. Nearly the whole of about 100 acres, which the ground seemed to comprise, was covered with pasture; and he informed us, that his cows and horses grazed here at this season of the year, as secure from the attacks of the bear, as if they had been upon a lone island in the midst of the sea. The other houses which formed the group, were occupied by members of his family intermarried, male and female, with Yakoutes, by which a little patriarchal settlement had been created.

Not all, however, that this *smotritel* said reached my ear, through the necessary interpretation, so clearly as to enable me to retain the recollection of any thing further, save some expressions of the most enthusiastic attachment of himself and all the members of his family to the domain which they enjoyed, and some observations which he made concerning his impressions of the world beyond his own little empire. To quit this happy oasis, which had been his world and his home since his childhood, to return to it no more, he told us, would be what he could not contemplate, without feelings that would be insupportable to him. Nevertheless, he cherished, he said, the hope of one day making a journey to Irkoutsk, if not to some part of Russia. What he appeared most to wish to see, was a church, of the character of which, he said, if he had ever seen such an edifice, he could retain no recollection. But if he were to visit Russia, he said, it would be chiefly that he might see the holy city of Moscow, with its Kremlin and all its magnificent churches, which he thought every man in the empire ought at least to visit once; and he caused several questions to be put to me, when he was told that I had lately inspected all the wonders of that ancient city.

We ourselves found something unaccountably attract-

ive in this green spot of solid ground in the midst of such interminable swamps. The position upon which the houses were built, it has been already mentioned, was a little elevated; and as we stood in front of them, and overlooked the far-extending morasses on every side, it was difficult for us to determine, whether there was most reason to admire this king of the swamp's resignation to a condition that would at first have appeared to us the greatest of misfortunes, or to envy him his independent empire.

No place during our journey afforded so good an opportunity for repose as this insulated spot of firm ground; and had we at this time passed all the swamps and morasses, we might, with a good conscience, have sat down to enjoy the compensation for our labours in a tranquil rest; but as we heard that we had yet just thirty more versts before us, that were even worse than those we had passed over, we went to bed with a determination to rise early, and to proceed on our journey at our usual hour of departure upon the following morning.

CHAP. XIX.

JOURNEY FROM YAKOUTSK TO OCHOTSK—*continued.*

The Prospect before us.—Comparison of the Difficulties for the Horse and the Rider.—Character of the Road.—Excellence of the Horses.—River Aldan.—Swamps of Twenty Versts.—Islet in the Swamp.—More Swamps.—The Worst of all the Swamps.—Remarkable Appearance of the Country around.—Prudence of the Yakoutes.—Signs of Change of Weather.—Consultation.—Descent into the Swamp.—Difficulties.—Wonders accomplished by the Horses.—Consultation in the Swamp.—Apprehended Danger.—Choice of Evils.—Resolution to persevere.—Renewal of our Hopes.—Patient Endurance of the Horses.—Surpass all former Efforts.—The Passage accomplished.—Exultation.—Encampment.

In the morning, we found the short relief from our ordinary experience of dirty huts and the company of their half-wild inhabitants, had completely refreshed our spirits; and as fresh horses, that had been at pasture since the grass had sprung, were already at the door for our use, we breakfasted, and took leave of the worthy king of the swamps at our accustomed early hour of mounting, to plunge once more among the mire.

These obstructions to the way, as long as they prevailed, were so much the worse for the horses, and the better for their riders, or the contrary, according to the less or greater quantity of rain recently fallen. Wherever the rain had been heavy and recent, there was the more water to wade through, which was rather in favour of the horses, as the mud at the bottom was then less tenacious and less difficult for them to withdraw their feet from as they made their steps; but the rider

was constantly in the water. But where there had been less rain, the mud at the bottom was of a stiffer consistence, though the mud and the water together were not so deep; and the labour of the animal was much increased, while the rider was dry, and had only his sympathy with the beast he rode upon to give him pain. The character of the first ten versts of this swamp was of the latter description; and the difficulties of their passage were such as I am convinced that no other horses with whose qualifications I am acquainted, would have surmounted. Subjection to this particular labour through a series of generations down to the present Siberian race of these animals, seems to have adapted them to encounter the peculiar difficulties of the country, and enabled them to perform what horses of the finest races in Europe or Southern Asia would certainly sink under upon the first trial.

In speaking of the Siberian horses in general, when we were in the more southern part of the country, their short and thick legs and their short and broad necks were noticed among the characteristics of their bodily conformation. Those of this region differ only from those of the more southern districts of the country in colour, stature, and weight. The horses of the south are of the same various colours which prevail among those of Europe, the grey being predominant, and black rare; but those of these districts are, with very rare exceptions indeed, all perfectly white; and they are generally shorter and lighter.

The day was half spent before we had marched ten versts; at the end of which we arrived at the River Aldan. This river is broad, shallow, and rapid. But we found a native ferryman, and we made the passage ourselves in his canoe, and swam our horses across the stream without experiencing any difficulty.

After this, we encountered a swamp for twenty

versts, in which the water exceeded in depth and the mud in tenacity any thing we had before experienced. If, indeed, our wonder and admiration had been excited at the strength of our horses, and the patience with which the poor animals had hitherto endured their sufferings, they were doubly so by what we witnessed from this time until we again rested. Sometimes the water was up to their necks; and then, indeed, some of the packages, which hung by the sides of the horses which carried baggage in addition to their riders, were floating, which gave some relief to the beasts. At other times, the roots of spruce trees and the mud beneath the water entangled and held their legs until we alighted, immersed above our waists in the water and mud, to aid them in disengaging themselves, and to wait until they recovered from the temporary exhaustion which they suffered.

During all these twenty versts, we rested but for one hour upon an islet similar to that which we had found in the middle of the portion of the swamps over which we first crossed; and it was about nine in the evening when we once more obtained firm footing upon the solid ground.

To proceed any further after we should again feel the solid earth beneath our feet, we had not contemplated; and as there were now no longer any inhabitants to be found, but at two long intervals of space, to admit of our getting better lodged, we were prepared to cut some stakes to form a tent with a light covering which we had brought with us, wherever we might find a convenient spot for the purpose. But the moment the horses felt the firm earth under their feet, they voluntarily set off at full trot, with apparently as much vigour as if they had been that moment taken from their pasture and had endured nothing; and as we had but five versts more to arrive at the commencement of

yet another section of the swamp, we determined to let them continue their way, and to defer encamping until we attained the border of the next obstruction to our progress.

Throughout these five versts, however, as we proceeded, we found little to exult in; for even here there were broad pits full of stiff mud up to the horses' knees, at every ten or twenty paces. Some of these required more exertion of strength to pass through than the worst swamp; but whenever the enduring animals, after every struggle, got again firm footing for only a few roods at a time, they seemed as if they had suffered nothing. Such, indeed, appeared to be their condition when we arrived at the edge of the swamp by which we had determined to encamp, that we now even hesitated between choosing to encamp or to proceed. We were upon the banks of a swamp, though only five versts in breadth, yet of greater difficulty in the passage, than any we had encountered and surmounted; but the same feeling possessed us now that we had experienced before encountering the last; and we did not like to lie down with these five versts before us. Yet, as some rest, at least, was necessary to recruit our strength, we sat down upon the dry ground and ate heartily of some ready-cooked beef, with which we had been furnished by the king of the swamps before our departure from the seat of his marshy empire. After this, while we sat round our *samovar*, sipping tea, our chief guide, like a general of division, rode forwards and backwards along the line of this swamp, to reconnoitre and find, if possible, some advantageous place at which we might recommence our march. And as the rest of the party, refreshed by the cheering beverage, became more full of hope, and perhaps too indifferent to the sufferings of the poor horses, it was agreed even to raise a common

cry against our leader, if he should decide upon deferring the attempt to overcome the immediate obstacles before us until the morning.

The view, too, of the swamp in our front, with such of the surrounding country as we could see, was novel; which is always more favourable to action than to repose. The drier portions of the country appeared covered with dark-coloured firs of the several species often mentioned as chiefly predominant, while the five dreaded verstes, which formed a portion of the landscape, and the bed of which was sunken beneath the level of the plain, were entirely covered with low and close-sown spruces of a light-green tint, as equal in colour, as far as the eye could reach upon our right and our left, as a green-leafed wood in the spring.

When our prudent leader returned to us, he declared that he could discover no one track that seemed better than the rest, to begin our passage of this swamp. He would have suggested, he said, remaining where we were until the morning, on account of the sufferings already undergone by our poor animals, but that there was every appearance of another storm and fresh torrents of rain, which, if they occurred, might oblige us to continue encamped here for several days, without the shelter of a tree; whereas, not far from the opposite side of the swamp, there were groves of firs, under which we might obtain tolerable shelter. Thus, we determined upon the attempt without making more delay than was necessary to enable the horses to recover in some degree from the exhaustion which they suffered. It was but to renew the contest with the same enemy we had already often vanquished; and the assurance of the reward that awaited us upon the opposite side of the swamp, in dry ground and fir groves, filled us with the hopes that might possess soldiers that pass to the deadly breach, when all the

incentives to success in the sacking of a town are present to their imaginations.

When all was ready, our chief guide now led the way, and we descended into the swamp, marching in single file. We passed the first half verst without more than the usual difficulty; but after this our trials augmented apace. Where, indeed, the water was deepest, we suffered less, as before, for the same reasons, though it was sometimes up to the horses' backs, and we were of course ourselves half immersed. In other places, sometimes one and sometimes another of the patient animals was brought completely to a stand, till encouraged by the presence or relieved by the tugging of several others at some ropes, which we fastened round their necks for the purpose. In places where the water was more shallow than ordinary, they frequently laid themselves down; and as we could not but respect their attempt to rest themselves, which seemed like a plaint against us for our apparent cruelty, we alighted, and stood awhile in the mire. My own beast, in one instance, made an attempt to lie down, where the water was too deep to leave his organs of respiration free, and thus completely ducked me in the cold pool; and the others served their riders much in the same way. But if there were any blame, it was not to the poor brutes that it was justly due.

Our line of march had been soon broken after we entered this swamp; and we became dispersed, and could only see one another's heads occasionally, where the swamp was shallowest and the spruces lowest. Our chief guide, however, when we were in the very midst of the swamp, conceived our position to be so desperate, that he called to us to assemble as near as possible together, to hold a consultation concerning the difficulties with which we were contending; and we all contrived to gather within a talking distance of one

another. Our Yakoute leader now declared the state of the swamp to be so much worse than he had expected to find it, that he thought we ought together to consider whether it were better that we should persevere in our efforts to attain the opposite side of this gulf of mire, or endeavour to return. Though the Yakoute's words were not known to us, their full value was easily understood by the signs, action, and expression of countenance with which they were accompanied; and they fell upon our ears like fresh syllables of dolor in the hour of affliction.

"Wherefore return?" said one of the party in words accompanied by signs. "We know the fearful portion of the swamp we have passed over, and may hope to find the remainder improve as we proceed."

"Because," said the chief guide, in reply, and in tolerably terse and forcible language, as it seemed to reach our ears, accompanied by the most significant signs, "because we know what is past, but not what is to come." And when it was argued that it could not be worse, the guide made signs to us, signifying that it might be much worse, and that in case it should prove so at the time when it was found impossible to reach the opposite side, it might then be equally impossible to return again, even across the last verst through which we should have waded.

To contemplate perishing in a swamp of five versts in breadth, after the hundreds of versts of the same character of country which we had passed over, seemed only worthy for a tyro in adventure; and the idea of retreat after facing the enemy so long and so valiantly, was worse than the contemplation of the risk before us. Nevertheless, such reasoning as this might only become those who had to try and to risk their own sinews and spirit alone; whereas, it was by the strength of nerve,

and courage of our beasts, that we must finally sink or swim.

After some further discussion about our position, it was determined, in consequence of one among the party reminding the rest that the horses would return upon their steps with more courage, and proportionate increase of strength, than they would go forward, that we should advance a short distance further, if this were possible, when we might hold a second council, with all the new bearings and our further experience before us. Suffice it, we met no worse troubles than those above described, until we were within, as we believed, less than a verst of the opposite side of the swamp, when return was impossible. Here, however, all our difficulties were augmented, with the addition of the torrents of rain which had been foreseen. Nevertheless, hope was certainly before us, and despair behind, and at least there could now arise no doubt about which course we should follow. The worst feature now was, that the swamp appeared to have no solid bottom at any depth, so that the horses were not able to stand, even for two or three minutes together, upon the same spot, in doing which, when in the middle of the swamp, they had been sometimes able to rest themselves when most exhausted. But,

> "Evils that are about to leave,
> Before their departure, most of all show evil;"

and it seemed to us, as if the noble animals that carried us knew very well, that though what remained to them to suffer was severe, the distance left, and the further duration of their sufferings, were but short; for they now appeared to make more than their former efforts. We became now, however, completely dispersed; and none of us, after this, knew how the rest were proceeding. My poor horse at one time, when he seemed

about to sink down for good, and when I was preparing to attempt the way without him, I found was only resting himself, by lying across a ridge of the roots of trees, which he had discovered beneath him, at a convenient depth to repose upon, with his mouth above water. I was disposed to permit him to lie as long as he pleased, though I was myself immersed to the waist in water. But he had not remained in this position above a minute, before he was roused to new efforts by one of the Yakoutes shouting out to signify, without doubt, that he was on the point of reaching the dry ground, and by the vigorous neighing of the guide's horse, which instantly followed, and was answered by all the rest.

The power of the passions over the sinews seems not to be limited to human nature. Wherever there is hope, it will, in proportion to its force, stimulate the muscles and sinews of the creature that possesses it. The efforts of my poor beast, which seemed before to have exhausted nature's provision for the last necessity, were now redoubled. But in a few minutes after this he received his reward; and, as he pressed once more the firm sod, he fell to neighing as lustily, as if he had just landed after merely swimming a narrow but cold stream, and set off at full trot along the edge of the swamp, to meet the only one of the guides with his horse, that had yet landed, and who now at the distance of 100 or 200 yards from the spot at which we touched again the firm ground, was coming also at full speed to meet us. A minute or two after this, the merchant joined us, and we now wanted only the Yakoutes and their horses, which carried the bulkier articles of the baggage. They had been embarrassed by their loads; but the hardy men had alighted, and marched up to their waists in the water and mud, and sometimes nearly to their necks, for several versts. They had mounted

again, however, at the neighing of our animals, and now joined us within a quarter of an hour after we had landed, without having lost a single article that they had in charge.

The immense morasses which we had now happily passed, are little less than three hundred versts in breadth, and the passage of them, if not the most dangerous, was, at least, the most arduous portion of all the journeys that I had, up to this period of these travels, encountered. I may say too, that our sufferings on this occasion afforded the first instance I ever met in travelling, that I have not found the difficulties of the way exaggerated by those from whom I have sought the information that is useful or indispensable before undertaking every journey. Nevertheless, the length of the details which have been given concerning the passage of some portions of these swamps, might seem out of proportion to the interest of the subject, were it not that these obstructions in the path of the traveller are themselves a remarkable natural feature of the country, and moreover, the occasion a good one, though not the sole instance, that the account of this journey will present, for illustrating the character of the Siberian horse, the good qualities of which have been before so much extolled in more general terms.

The firm ground upon which we here stood, is formed by the banks of the River Berli, which we now followed for several versts, crossing two or three small streams in our way, in search of a good dry and sheltered place to encamp, and where, at the same time, there might be grass for our horses in the morning. At length, after a march of seventeen hours, we pitched our tents in an open grove of spruces, springing from a grass bed by the side of the stream.

While my companion and myself were changing our clothes, the Yakoutes made a good fire near the entrance

of our tent, and prepared an excellent mess of *stchee*, of the fresh beef which we had remaining; after which, we sipped tea, with a satisfaction only to be appreciated in a similar position. If there were any thing, indeed, to draw from the full measure of our content, it was the knowledge that our poor beasts, which had been the greatest of the sufferers during the last entire day, instead of being permitted to satisfy the cravings of nature which they sustained, were, according to custom, tied to the trees, and kept fasting. And it seemed not much calculated to relieve their sufferings, that there was here abundance of grass growing around them, and beneath their very feet.

Our manner of encamping was like that of the Tungouse, save that the covering of our tent was of cotton, instead of birch bark, with which the Tungouse cover their wigwams. Our beds were formed of fresh spruce boughs, and were excellent. The Yakoutes had no tent, and they did not require any. They lay themselves down by the fire, careful only, that flame enough was kept up during the night, to secure them against any insidious approach of the bear, upon whose proper territory we had now entered, that savage animal having, like all the tribes that we have not made our associates, a great dread of fire.

Before I lay down, after this arduous day's journey, I endeavoured to persuade our half-wild companions to consent to let our horses pick at least a morsel of grass; but they were too positive in resisting any such infringement upon the established custom of the country, to leave room to doubt that there were sufficient reasons for this apparently cruel usage of these faithful aids and companions of our journey. Thus, after their unparalleled labours, and now that we were at rest, and had satisfied the cravings of our nature, and even fared sumptuously, they were still doomed to five hours of

fasting, not a minute of which, according to the opinion of the Yakoutes, could be abated, without endangering the lives of the beasts, or at least risking a day's detention, on account of the sickness which it was declared would not fail to follow such mistaken humanity.

CHAP. XX.

JOURNEY FROM YAKOUTSK TO OCHOTSK—*continued.*

Manner of the Yakoutes Tethering their Horses.—The Rhubarb Plant serves the Horses for Food.—Consumption of our Food.—Voracious Appetites of the Yakoutes.—Necessary Restraint.—Passage of the River Berli.—Woods.—Passage of a First Ridge of Hills.—Detachment of a Caravan.—Loss of Horses in the Swamps.—A Horse killed by the Bears.—Character of the Merchandise.—Busy Scene.—Continue our Journey.—Fear of the Horses of the Bears.—Unquiet Night.—Unsuccessful Hunt.—Pitiable Condition of the Horses.—Arrival at a Post.—Intelligent Yakoute *Smotritel.*—Streams.—Country of the Bears.—New Beasts.—Mistrust of their Capacity.—Sentimental Leave-taking of our long-tried Friends.—Humanity of the Yakoutes.—The Wild Man may instruct the most Civilised.

WITHIN the tent we slept well; and we did not awake until a late hour in the morning: nor did we care to rise until we had compensated our overwrought strength, after the fatigues to which we had been subjected during the long and arduous trials of the preceding day.

When we came out of our snug little domicile, we found the Yakoutes lying by a blazing fire, entirely enveloped in their deer-skins, and apparently sound asleep. They had been up, however, and had tethered their horses after the mode of the country; and the hungry animals were biting the grass with a keenness that indicated either that they had been but a short time at pasture, or were conscious that they had but a few short moments to lay in their spare store of food for another day's journey.

The manner in which the Yakoutes tether their

horses is peculiar, but has doubtless been found suited to the necessity of the case. A rope is fastened by a loop beneath the fetlock of one of the animal's hind feet, then passed round the upper part of his fore leg, and afterwards made fast round the neck. This effectually prevents them from straying far enough away to elude search when wanted, and yet leaves them at liberty, at the appearance of the bear, to gather close to the encampment of their rational companions, where the fires, which are rarely left to get low, even though the men should be all sleeping, are generally sufficient to prevent the enemy's too near approach.

One or two of our horses appeared to prefer the pasture where it seemed to us to be the poorest; but, upon approaching them, we found they were eating the leaves of the rhubarb plant, which, indeed, afterwards, during some of our stages, where it was more abundant, became an important article of their food.

As we did not know how our half-wild friends, still sleeping, had passed the night, nor how long the horses had been feeding, we thought it better to leave all parties undisturbed, and to begin ourselves the preparations for some necessary refreshment before our departure. After rummaging our sacks, however, we found that already all the fresh stock that we had so lately obtained was devoured. The quantity that we had left in the evening was so great, that had I not been before among the Bouriats, and seen something, and heard more, of their voracious appetites, and had I not been afterwards told that the Yakoutes were greater eaters than they, I could not have believed it possible that the edacious powers of any four men of any race could have been great enough to consume all that had been left after our last night's supper. It was, nevertheless, a good lesson to us; and, believing it to be equally prudent and justifiable to restrain such dan-

gerous appetites in so scarce a country, we determined at once upon putting our friends upon such allowance as our present stock and our expectations seemed to render necessary.

When the Yakoutes awoke, we had already finished the solids of our breakfast, if the dry stuff, which was once mutton, might be so termed, and we were over our refreshing *samovar*. As soon as our companions saw how we were occupied, and observed by the sun how far the day had advanced, they assured us that the horses had been feeding for three hours, and that it was now time to put an end to their feasting, which they declared that the poor animals had already indulged to excess. We let them, of course, have their way; and, after they had secured the horses, we handed them each a small portion of biscuit to eat hastily before our departure, taking care, at the same time, to let them know that we were quite aware of the good supper they had made, and of the little need they had of a similar breakfast.

It was about nine o'clock when we recommenced our march. An hour brought us to the point where we were to pass over the River Berli, by which we had encamped. We found here a little Yakoute hut, inhabited by a family who kept a small canoe, in which we crossed the stream, while our men passed the horses over by driving them into the water, in the same manner as on a former occasion.

After passing the Berli, we found the country more thickly wooded, with the accustomed varieties of the fir tribes, than any we had passed through since the commencement of our journey. Our horses did not appear to want a particle of the spirits and strength with which they had set out upon the previous day; and our march, though occasionally impeded by deep beds of mud, which we could not escape, was almost

as rapid as that of the first days after our leaving Yakoutsk.

Towards evening we mounted the gradual ascent of the first range of hills which we met with, and which, in effect, form the first step of the broad range of high lands which lie between the districts of the swamps and the sea, and are comprised under the appellation of the Iablonoi or Stanovoi Mountains. The woods here seemed to us, after the country we had passed through, both close and luxuriant; and we observed some larch mixed with the varieties of the coarser firs.

Towards evening, as we descended the same hills, we overtook the chief detachment of our merchants' long-looked-for caravan, which we found, from the captain of the party, had lost fourteen more horses in the passage of the swamps upon this side of the post, at which he had replaced his previous losses. One had also been killed, and another lacerated by a bear. The ferocious beast that had killed his prey, had taken the horse at tether, and had not been seen by the men. He had drawn out and carried away the entrails of the animal, to feast upon the delicacy at a distance to which none of the party could follow him, without leaving the caravan for too long a time. This was the first notice we had of the necessity we were now under of taking all sorts of precautions against the attacks of these voracious beasts as we proceeded.

At the time of our coming up with the party, they were upon the point of encamping for the night. The caravan still consisted of nearly a hundred horses, every one charged with four pouds in weight, packed in a manner similar to those that have been before mentioned, in which we carried our provisions and baggage. The principal part of the merchandise which the caravan was transporting consisted of articles for the supply of the government stores at the port of

Ochotsk, which had been contracted for by the commercial house to which my companion belonged. The rest comprised several articles of European manufacture, the principal of which was cloth, and some tea and a large proportion of tobacco. These articles were chiefly to exchange with the aborigines of the country, for furs for the Siberian and Russian markets.

Tea and tobacco are prized beyond all other things by the Siberians of the Russian race, wherever they are found. Tobacco, however, is equally valued, and tea not much less so, by the aborigines, both nomadic and settled, in this part of the country, and even within the territories of an independent tribe, whom we shall notice in a future page.

The caravan, as we sat on our own beasts, presented to us a novel and agreeable spectacle. The horses stood tied in groups round the trees, and about thirty Yakoutes were busily occupied in cutting wood, lighting fires, and preparing their supper, in which they displayed all the quickness and activity which belong to the Russians, with the good humour of a party of *isvoshtchiks* or *yemstchiks* upon a national *fête* day.

We remained among them only long enough for the merchant to transact his affairs with the captain of the detachment, which was easily done, as we sat over our ever-welcome *samovar*. We then set off again, in the hope of overtaking the party still in advance, which had left Yakoutsk a week earlier, but which was now probably not more than two of our longest days' journeys ahead of us.

About an hour before midnight, we stopped and encamped in a grove of spruces, by the side of a brook, which was always desirable, on account of the advantage it afforded of obtaining good water, and, not less so, on account of the greater quantity of fresh pasture which we found for our beasts.

Our horses during the whole of this day had shown signs of terror of their savage enemy the bear; and while the Yakoutes were pitching our tents, and preparing for supper, the merchant and myself, with our arms in hand, scoured the wood immediately around us, to see that no enemy was in waiting to catch us sleeping. All was, however, quiet, and seemed secure; and we supped, and lay down as usual, leaving the Yakoutes by the fire, to make their own arrangements for the watch, but with strict injunctions that they should call us, without the least delay, in case of there being the smallest cause of alarm.

We slept as soundly, for the first two hours of this night, as at ordinary times during the journey. About an hour after midnight, however, one of the Yakoutes came into our tent, to tell us that he was sure there was a bear near at hand, as the horses, just as they were accustomed to do when their shaggy enemy appeared, had left the better pasture upon which they had been placed, and would not trust themselves any longer a dozen yards from their masters and the fire.

At this news we gladly jumped up, in the hope of a contest with the common enemy; certainly not quite so fair on our side as the war waged against them by the natives; but the want of whose dexterity in the use of simpler weapons might well excuse us for employing the same means men employ to destroy one another.

We now entered the wood on one side, with our fowling-pieces in hand and our pistols at the girdle, while our friends took the opposite side with their daggers only, promising to give us timely notice in case they discovered the enemy, that we might at least share the sport. But after a full hour's hunt through the wood around, all ended in disappointment. We found, indeed, no trace of wild beast of any kind; so we re-entered our tent, and lay down again to rest. We

had, however, a very unquiet night; for such was still the terror of the horses, that they got within the strings of our tent, and after disturbing us for some time, at length knocked the tent down. We had no cause, however, to regret this; for when we had disengaged ourselves from the entanglement in which we were involved by the fall of the tent, we were surprised to find all the Yakoutes soundly sleeping. Two of them were snugly rolled up in their skins, and lying by the fire; while a third, that should have been watching, was sitting with his back against some bags he had piled up, as unconscious as the others, and the fire was very low. We disturbed only the sleeping sentinel, whom we set to work to replenish the expiring fire, while we lay down now after the manner of the rest. Of repose, however, we had even still very little; for our timid beasts, whether they had seen one of their dreaded enemies, or had only had olfactory evidence of one of them being at hand, continued to crowd about us and disturb us; and which, indeed, it was not our interest, and scarcely our inclination, to prevent, although we lost by it the most precious part of the time we had allotted for repose.

But, besides the inconvenience attending this gratifying confidence in us on the part of our horses, when the hour came for renewing our journey, the condition of the poor beasts, which had scarcely had any more food since we halted than a few leaves of the rhubarb plant, was worse than ours. The merchant and myself would even now, notwithstanding our desire to push on, have led them to the pasture to feed for an hour, rather than have mounted them, hungry as they were, had not our Yakoutes declared that they were better without any food whatever for four and twenty hours and more, than with the quantity with which they would now stuff themselves if they were permitted to feed;

and, moreover, that there was a post at the distance of two or three hours from where we had been resting, at which we should change. So, after our accustomed frugal morning meal, during which we gave the guides just enough to keep them alive, we recommenced our journey.

After about two hours' march this morning, we arrived at the thirteenth post, called Tshernoleska, ninety versts distant from that at which we had obtained the noble animals which we were now to leave behind us. The *smotritel* whom we found here was a Yakoute, and he had only a very wretched hut placed in the midst of an indifferent piece of pasture ground. But we observed plenty of horses feeding around, which at least seemed to guarantee our speedy departure; so that the merchant and myself, while the Yakoutes occupied themselves with discharging our animals, and preparing to continue the journey, endeavoured to obtain from the owner of our new beasts, who was able to converse with my companion, as much information as we could concerning the condition of the country before us.

The sum of the information we received from this Yakoute was, that we should find another post about thirty-five versts further, but which the difficulties that the country presented for travelling rendered it impossible we could reach that day. Our track he described as mountainous and full of rapid streams. The mountains, however, he informed us, were not of difficult ascent; but that the amount of obstruction we should receive from the streams, would entirely depend upon the quantity of rain that had lately fallen in the higher lands which we were about to pass, and upon the effects of the sun in melting the snow, and upon the ice of the glaciers, which all the year cover the extensive table of the irregular broad range of mountains, of

which we might consider we had already begun the ascent.

Our troubles during our passage of some of the streams through which we had already waded, had been such, that we had quite forgotten the bear, till this Yakoute placed him also among the augmented inconveniences which we must still expect to encounter on the way, not on account of any personal danger to ourselves (of which there was little cause of alarm), but on account of the difficulty that is found of feeding the horses while the party is at rest wherever this animal abounds, and of which we had already had, indeed, some experience.

His own difficulty, the Yakoute also informed us, in preserving his horses from the bears upon the first melting of the snow in the spring, while their food was yet scarce, was very great. But he usually killed four or five of them between that time and the growing of the berries upon which they chiefly fed. He used a civilised weapon—certainly a gun, though to what tribe it belonged, and what name to give it when he brought it to show us, we might be pardoned for not knowing; but by the time he had committed that amount of destruction, the bears usually forsook his vicinity.

He had lost, he informed us, only one or two very young horses for some years. As his beasts were never tethered, they saved themselves by gathering about his house when alarmed; for as there was no darkness after the melting of the snow, until the time when the food of the bears was abundant, their enemy had not the advantage of the night when most in need of extraneous provision; and by day-light the fiercest among them rarely came near his dwelling.

While we were conversing with this Yakoute, some good women of his household prepared our *samovar*,

and a large quantity of milk, which was all the refreshment they had to give us; and by the time we had well satisfied ourselves with tea and this luxury, the fresh horses were ready to be loaded for our use.

Our first acquaintance with our next fellow-travellers of burden did not give us any very high expectations. There was not much beauty, indeed, to admire in those we were now to abandon; but these were their inferiors in size, and apparently in every thing in which strength is supposed to lie. It was evident that they had not the daily food of the horses of the sovereign of the swamps, within whose domain both man and beast seemed to fare so sumptuously. But their owner, when we dispraised them, smiled; not, indeed, like a horse dealer cunningly bent upon practising some deception, but in the confidence of honesty, with the assurance of how soon we should be undeceived; and we had seen too many wonders in this way already, to have any want of confidence in the virtues of any of the *chevaline* race of the country.

After this inspection of our fresh animals, we passed on to take a last leave of those we were to abandon. They were tied to the trunk of a tree, and were tranquilly standing with their heads hanging beneath their shoulders at perfect rest, and seemed half asleep and half awake. We talked to them, and caressed them, and bade them warm adieus. It was a satisfaction to us, since we could not do more, to lift up their long white manes, which hung down to their knees upon both sides of their necks, and to pat them again and again. The scene of human and brute intercourse did not, however, end here. While we were thus occupied, our Yakoute friends came to take the same leave of their irrational companions: and their leave-taking, it is necessary to confess, was far more worthy of the occasion than ours. Instead of vain apostrophes and

regrets such as we had used, these good men threw their arms round the necks—every one of the animal that he had ridden—and hugged and caressed them as fondly and tenderly, as if the dumb beasts had been of the same nature and race as themselves. Nor, indeed, was the gratifying scene yet wholly ended. One of our Yakoutes came up to me when he saw that we were imitating their example, and touched me on the shoulder; and when I turned, he said something, which, as he did not accompany his words with action, I did not understand. Upon this, however, this native of the forest stretched up his right arm, and pointing with his forefinger towards the sky, said *Tagarra*, which I knew very well from our vocabulary was the term in his language for God. Then, with a countenance as expressive of high moral feeling as I ever saw portrayed upon the features of the most benevolent of men, he attempted again to explain himself by words. But though their general tenour might be divined, I could not distinctly understand him. Then seeing this, he now explained himself in a manner that the dullest of mortal men could not have failed to comprehend. He pointed again to the sky, and uttered the same phrase as before, and then placed his hand upon my shoulder, and then upon the horse, and then upon his own shoulder, and then again pointed to the sky. It was evident that he said, "We are all three children of the same Parent, and ought to be kind and affectionate to one another."

How many sages—if an observation may be here permitted concerning the moral we seemed to learn from our semi-barbarous companions — have been indebted to the boor in human learning, for knowledge which is not to be acquired through the ordinary intercourse between equals. Wherefore, then, should not civilised men, which we at least deemed ourselves to be, learn

from such of our species as have had nature alone for their guide, and who, though strangers to much of the knowledge we possess, are not without the innate impression, as it is plain, that all creatures, whether rational or irrational, are children of the same Parent. Here we at least learned that, whatever the deficiencies of the companions of our journey in what we deem the essentials of civilisation, they were not without the full impulse of the heart, when any occasion gave it the opportunity of utterance.

CHAP. XXI.

JOURNEY FROM YAKOUTSK TO OCHOTSK — *continued.*

Streams of Torrents.—Change in the Character and Interest of the Journey.—Quality of our Horses.—Fresh Instances of the Sagacity of our Horses.—Wading Rivers.—Nature of the Danger.—Higher Lands.—Character of the Forests.—Fine Weather.—Continual Ascent.—Smaller Streams.—Precipitous Way.—Cross the First Ridge of Hills.—Views.—Shallow Valleys.—Narrow Plains.—Glaciers.—Their curious Character.—Mosquitoes.—Tea on the Ice.—Rapid March.—Scarcity of Provisions.—Advantages of not being a great Eater.—Yakoute Porridge of Bark and Spruce Tops.—Unexpected Discovery concerning our Companions.—Mists.—Superstitions of the Yakoutes.—Character of their Conversion to Christianity.—Their moral Condition.—Impressions of the Presence of invisible Spirits.

After leaving the post last mentioned, we encountered stream after stream with rapid torrents during the rest of the day. Sometimes for many versts, our proper road lay upon the beds of these streams; and where this was not the case, the banks upon the right and the left alternately formed steep cliffs without a beach, which kept us continually crossing and recrossing the torrents that swept down between them.

The immediate character and interest of the journey were now quite changed; and the torrents through which we had to wade, and the precipitous banks we had often to climb and descend without a path before us, offered more real danger, though they were less painful to encounter, both to ourselves and to our horses, than any we had experienced during the passage of the swamps.

In some of the more rapid streams, the water was up

to our horses' necks and filled with large and loose stones of all forms, which it seemed as if it were impossible the beasts under us could pass over without falling. The sagacity, indeed, of the Siberian horse, now displayed in these new difficulties, was not less than those good qualities of his race for which we were indebted to him for our safe passage across the swamps. The noble animals maintained the position while wading the streams, which is doubtless that alone which could enable creatures of their form to cross a rapid current. We observed, that they not only leaned towards the side from which the current flowed, and bent their knees on the same side, but that at the same time they opened and spread out their legs, to obtain the firmest possible hold of the ground.

But besides these rapid torrents, we passed several fords of deeper streams, where the inconveniences were greater, though the danger was less. Several times the water reached half way up our horses' bodies, and in one instance, we found our beasts swimming, whilst we ourselves were immersed to the waist. But in these streams the current was not so strong as in those that were shallower, and there was little risk, indeed, of more than a ducking, such as we were well accustomed to, and thought not worth regarding, after our sufferings in the swamps. The danger to the rider, when the water is shallower and the current strongest, arises from the bed of the river being then most encumbered with the large and loose stones, by which his horse will sometimes be thrown down. In this event, he must disengage himself both from the animal beneath him and from every thing with which he is encumbered, as soon as he can; and, as it would be useless to attempt to walk with legs offering so much more resistance to the torrent than those of the horse, in proportion to the weight of his body, it is necessary, even though the water

should not be above three feet deep, to strike out immediately, to gain the nearest shore; for he may be certain that wherever the fords are found, there is deep water immediately below them. For all this, however, we were well prepared.

At length, after a day during which our wadings of these streams formed the only incident worthy of remembrance, we encamped in a place similar to that where we had passed the last night, having made fifty versts during the day, and, as we believed, about thirty-five since we passed the post at which we had last changed.

On the morning after our first experience of the nature of travelling in the higher lands in this part of the country, we were upon our way again at an early hour. As we had been marching against the course of the rivers all the previous day, the streams that we now crossed were generally narrower, and offered less obstruction in the passage of them than we had experienced when we were further from their sources; so that we proceeded more rapidly, while we had at the same time more leisure to observe the character of the country around us.

Until now, the spruce in its ordinary varieties had been sometimes the only kind of tree or shrub that was to be seen; and at other times the larch, with more kindly growth, flourished side by side with the several species of the hardier fir. Here and there, indeed, we had observed the pine growing, but only to the size, and in the form, of a mere shrub. But now we had the two first mentioned of these species among the innumerable varieties of the fir, of more luxuriant growth and in nearly equal quantities, and at the same time, pines much larger in size than those we had seen before, and so rare and curious in form as to be worthy of particular remark. Not in a few instances merely,

but during nearly the whole of this day's journey, we observed these trees growing as nearly as possible in the form of a bell turned upside down, and set upon its handle, which was represented by the trunk of the tree. The particular species appeared to be that of the common white pine, which, although I had been it growing both where scarce and where abundant, of all sizes, from the shrub up to the sovereign of the most magnificent forests, I never before observed taking this form. Here, however, where it seemed to have robbed all the other species that appeared in its immediate vicinity of their fair share of the earth's foison and abundance—for none of any other kind which were near it exceeded in growth the smaller shrubs—its height did not exceed that of the spruce in favourable situations, or perhaps twenty feet, while the bowl of the bell that was formed must have been in many instances eighty or ninety, and in some cases above a hundred feet in circumference.

The weather had been fine since we reached the dry lands, and we enjoyed the first part of this day, as freer from the natural obstructions to travelling which the country offers, than any we had passed since the first days of our journey. We were continually ascending the hills in front of us; and, before mid-day, the streams had become mere brooks, though our way was now more precipitous, and more fatiguing for our horses.

Early in the afternoon we crossed the summit of the first ridge of hills of any considerable height forming the grand mountain range. Owing to the rugged character of the ground, and the winding of the ways through which we had passed, we had obtained but one view of the country around, and that had been at no great elevation. But here we were more fortunate; and we halted for a short time to refresh our wearied sense,

so long fixed upon the same scenes immediately around us. We had now, indeed, an extensive view of the country through which we had passed, which presented to us an undulated and vast tract of land covered with its sombre groves, that seemed to want nothing but the variations in the colour of the vegetation of more temperate climes to exhibit all the freshness and variety of the most luxuriant forests.

After this we passed over narrow plains or shallow valleys, in which the horses were sometimes up to their knees in snow, and at other times marching upon masses of ice, honeycombed upon the surface by the rays of the sun, though quite solid beneath. These are the glacial districts of these mountains, whence the streams of the lower country are supplied with water, when the sun has its full force in the height of summer. This source, however, of these streams is cut off with the earlier frosts, which usually occur towards the end of August; after which the lesser rivers are dried up. In some places we found rents in the ice like fissures in solid rocks; and through these the water was running over the ground in winding courses just in the manner that the brooks generally flow; and to pass them was difficult, on account of the thickness of the ice, which was from ten to fifteen feet. But in some places these unsubstantial banks of the streams were so worn beneath by the passage of the water, that, upon the horses approaching the edge of them, large sheets upon which we were marching broke off, and let us easily down; while the noise they occasioned in falling, made the hills echo with the loud sound from one extremity of the vale to the other. But what was most remarkable to observe upon these glacial fields, was the heat of the sun's rays reflected from the ice, which was greater than any thing of the kind I remembered experiencing, except the reflection from the sand in the hottest climates.

Here, too, and far from the dry ground or trees, the quantity of the mosquitoes which swarmed until five in the afternoon exceeded any thing we had met with in the swamps. Altogether, the scenes and all we experienced during this day were novel in our travels; and the noise at all times of the ice melting sensibly around us—the occasional deep sounds caused by the falling of masses of the frozen element by the side of the streams—the crackling of the horses' feet as they crushed the honeycombed ice beneath them—the murmur of the running waters—the clouds of mosquitoes, and the excessive heat,—left an impression as indelible as that of the more disagreeable portions of the journey already described.

While we were in the region of these glaciers, we took our accustomed hour's rest during the day. After making a little fire in the stove of the *samovar*, for which the Yakoutes had provided fuel, we boiled water without the least difficulty; and after placing some packages on the ice, sat down upon these, and partook of tea and biscuits.

Our march to-day was more rapid than usual; and, at the sixteenth hour from the time we left the last place of encampment, we halted in a deep and wooded valley, surrounded with high mountain peaks, which from their conical forms, were evidently of volcanic formation; and we were now, by the estimation of our guides, about sixty versts from the spot upon which we had last slept.

I believe I may here notice the want to which we were now reduced, though so soon after the last replenishment of our stock of provisions, as a little incident of the journey, and place the inconveniences which we thereby suffered to the right account, without any danger of setting down aught in malice.

When we came to prepare our supper this evening, myself at least was much surprised to find all the biscuits gone, which was certainly, as they had been hitherto the staple of our spare larder, a matter of not a little importance upon such a journey. However, I was tolerably confident, that among certain sacks that were yet untouched, there was something in reserve that would turn out nearly as good; some treat perhaps, such as rye or barley flour, which our good caterer might intend to surprise the whole party with, whenever the need was most manifest. There was, indeed, nothing of our former articles of food left, save about half a meal of the dry chips of mutton for two of us; and I was rather curious than anxious to see what would now turn up, quite determined to be satisfied with whatever it might happen to be. And I was the less inquisitive upon the subject, lest I should chance to deprive my companion of the gratification, of which I thought he might be anticipating the enjoyment, when he should produce his reserve. Not being myself at any time a great eater — and I may say, that at this time I had never met with any man of any race that could maintain his strength and spirits upon so little food, or so long upon nothing, as I have been able to do — I have generally been careless about the travelling larder, and more especially when not alone; for I would rather travel upon biscuit and water, and have no plague about it, than upon roast beef, and have the responsibility of satisfying others. For once, however, I now met my equal, if not in the accomplishment of which I have just boasted, certainly in negligence in making provision for eventual necessity; and I confess I was as much disappointed as astonished, when I heard upon the first hint that was given concerning the contents of the well-cared-for sacks, that they contained only the merchant's samples of fine goods, save indeed one alone,

which did not exceed the dimensions of a lady's reticule, which was filled with parched peas. But our caterer was a young traveller, and probably myself of the two was the most to blame for the situation in which we now found ourselves.

Already the Yakoutes had had nothing from us but occasionally a handful of biscuit dust between them, since we left the last post. Some milk which they procured there, and which they had put into a leathern bag, turned to a kind of cheese before we stopped again, and had been eaten by them before they lay down, upon the first night.

Nevertheless, such is the adaptation of the different tribes and classes of our varied species to the particular circumstances of their condition, and such the variety in the manner of life of men of distinct races, inhabiting different parts of the earth, that while we pitied the Yakoutes, whom we had reduced, as we supposed, by sad necessity to an allowance from our spare larder such as the same number of mice would have starved upon, these semi-wild men were actually living in luxury, compared with the manner in which we ourselves fared, and were feeding, which was much more, upon food that could not, like ours, fail.

We had, indeed, observed our friends boiling their pot; but we had been so busy hunting the brooks for ducks, or the bushes for bears, or the woods for birds of any kind that we might chance to find, that we little regarded what they were about, or thought they were only making the most of what we had given them. But upon now perceiving, as they sat round a cauldron, dipping up its contents with wooden spoons, and cooling broth with their breath, that they were at the same time crushing some solid article of food between the teeth, we examined their mess, and found it to consist of the bark of the spruce chopped in small pieces, and

boiled with the glutinous tops of the young sprouts of the same tree.

I had certainly before heard that these men could live upon such food; but I thought it a fable at the time, and had before this, long forgotten that I had heard it. When I now, however, actually saw them eat of this mess, I called to mind that I had read also in one of the works of our great natural philosopher Herschel, that sawdust itself was susceptible of conversion into a substance bearing no remote analogy to bread, and which, moreover, was both wholesome and digestible, as well as highly nutritious; and without having read which, I should scarcely have ventured to mention what we here witnessed, and perhaps at this time have thought, notwithstanding what I had heard, that I had been dreaming, when the note wherein this circumstance is registered was written.* Thus we now sat down over our mess of peas and last morsel of clip mutton, to eat it entirely ourselves with a very clear conscience, and in trusting that our guns might still aid us in time of greater need, in providing a better meal than that upon which the Yakoutes were feasting with apparently as much satisfaction as if they were over a mess of beef *stchee.*

We made to-night a little discovery, belonging rather to the moral than the physical incidents of the journey. Soon after our tent had been pitched, a thick mist entirely enveloped the grove around; and as the air was damp and disagreeable, while the Yakoutes reposed, or told tales to one another over the fire, we took our *samovar* within the tent, and afterwards sat down over the chiboock, indisposed for conversation, and dozing like Arabs. Indeed, the weather and the hour were such

* Herschel's "Preliminary Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy."

as tended more to induce thought and reflection than action; and even the time, in relation to our past and future travels, was that which naturally disposes the mind as well as the body to relaxation and rest. The iron character of the journey seemed broken, in spite of our material wants. We were encamped in a sequestered vale near the summit of the mountains, with the descent from which we should encounter the streams that fall into the Ochotsk Sea, on which myself, at least, trusted that I should soon embark for other and sunnier climes.

After we had been seated for some time, indulging separate thoughts, our attention was called to the unusual silence beyond the folds of the tent, and we came out together to discover the cause of this. We found now a thicker mist prevailing than that from which we had fled, concealing every thing beyond the distance of a dozen yards around us. We approached the fire to see whether the Yakoutes were sleeping earlier than usual. But here we found only some red-hot logs mouldering to ashes, or changing to a more volatile element; and not one of the Yakoutes, either awake or asleep, was any where to be seen.

The absence of our guides surprised us; and after waiting some time, and seeing no one, we called out several times at the top of our voices, to give them notice wheresoever they might be, that we required their presence. But no one appeared, and no voice was heard in answer to this call, and no signal of any kind was returned. The mist was too dense to give us hopes of a search for our friends being of any avail; so we sat ourselves down quietly upon some logs by the fire, to await patiently the solution of the mystery.

The mist continued to veil every thing around us, save the faint outlines of the spruces, which were magnified to great trees by the vapoury atmosphere,

through which they were seen; and there was not the smallest motion in the air to disturb the dead silence which reigned.

A full hour passed, and we heard and saw nothing that led to any conjecture concerning the mysterious absence of the Yakoutes. They could not have forsaken us, or we should have wanted our horses also, which were all tranquilly dozing by our side. They could not have gone to gather wood, for logs were lying in abundance within a yard of the fire. Nor could they have gone in search of water, for a gentle brook "made sweet music with the enamelled stones" at our very feet. We thought of the bears. But no beasts could have made a meal upon four stout Yakoutes, without a ceremony over their feast that would have alarmed and brought forth fresh foes, whose eyes and ears had not even been closed, to dispute their right to mangle and devour human flesh. Were our hitherto faithful friends about to put on a new character, and attack us? To suspect their fidelity in any particular was difficult. But so far from believing them capable of making war upon us, either open or covert, we knew that subjection to a degree of respect towards civilised men their conquerors, even beyond any thing perhaps ever before seen among men in a similar condition, was a remarkable feature in the character of the race to which they belonged; and we had no ground for thinking they might be an exception to the general character of their people. Yet where were they? We called again and again at intervals, but received no answer. At length, after repeated calls with no better success, we fired a gun, which echoed through the mist from peak to peak, among the volcanic hills around us, like the distant roar of many cannons. Yet no voice replied, and no one appeared.

While, however, we were still engaged in conjec-

tures concerning the absence of our men, we chanced to discover near the spot upon which the horses stood some loose white horse-hair lying strewed about upon the ground; and upon examining the horses, we found it quite certain that some hair had been cut from the tails and manes of more than one of them. At first this seemed, indeed, but to thicken the mystery; but when we now recalled to our recollection having several times during the journey seen some locks of horse-hair attached to the pendant boughs of the taller trees, and that, when we had inquired of the guide the cause of this, we appeared to receive only evasive answers, a stream of new light floated across our murky imaginations, and we remembered having been told at Yakoutsk, that although these aborigines of the land were Christians by law, and even by outward assent while dwelling among men "that with holy bell are knoll'd to church," yet that the ukase before mentioned, which had effected this important step in their moral progress, had not had power to abolish wholly their ancient religious rites, which were still practised by them in secret upon every favourable occasion. And as the very place, the mist, and the hour, seemed all favourable to this purpose, we could no longer doubt the cause of the absence of the Yakoutes.

After waiting very patiently for some time longer, we at length heard the cracking of dried sticks and other sounds of footsteps; and presently our friends appeared slowly advancing towards us, magnified to the size of giants by the dense mist through which they were seen. They evidently approached full of doubts of their absence being approved of, and probably suspicious of our divining the purpose for which they had hidden themselves from observation. There appeared, in fact, a gloom and sadness upon their countenances when they were near us, that would itself have confirmed, if it had been ne-

cessary, all that we had conjectured. However, we felt bound to respect their religious rites, whatever they might be, and we made no remarks in allusion to their retirement and their neglect to appear at our summons, lest the imperfection of the means of intercourse we possessed might cause what we said to be misunderstood. For my own part I have always thought it a favourable sign in any unenlightened portion of my fellow-men, when I have observed indications of their consciousness of dependence upon some Superior Being; and I have, among the wildest races, always looked upon this in proportion to the sincerity which appears, and the moral which is attached to particular superstitions, as indicative of the sooner or later conversion of the people to the religion of civilised man. In general, indeed, the more ridiculous the faith of tribes among whom the more civilised nations have mixed, the more certain and speedy has been its destruction. And is it not, in the meantime, agreeable to reason to suppose, that even the worship of an idol, at least if it be not such as is excited by terror alone, but rather springing from a sense of gratitude, is more acceptable to the Creator than the orisons of the man of refinement whose actions do not correspond to the words which his lips utter, or who is moved by the terror attendant upon the uncertainty of the future rather than by thankfulness for the past, and for his hopes of a state to come?

Thus we went to bed, and took no account of the doings of our friends, nor presumed to judge whether they were evil or good; and it is scarcely necessary to add, that the first man of the Sclavonian race that we met, that was well acquainted with the character and condition of the Yakoutes, informed us, that all our suppositions concerning the cause of the absence of the men were without doubt quite correct. And the same

Russian, who was acquainted with all the superstitions extant among these people, informed us, that the rites of their ancient worship consist, for the most part, in sacrifices to invisible spirits, which they suppose dwell in the woods, and more especially in those that bound these and other mountains; and that portions of the horses' tails that we had frequently seen attached to the branches of trees, were there placed to notify to these imaginary beings when they might chance to pass by, that such rite had been performed, and that thereabout they would find the sacrifice offered, which it was thought in this case was probably something these men had saved from their last meal of good food.

Perhaps of all the impressions upon the minds of men that are not the offspring of a higher faculty than the imagination, nothing is more natural than that which peoples even this world with beings that are of a nature different from our own, and imperceptible to our senses; and accordingly, such appears to have been the belief even of some of the great departed among ourselves.

> "Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,
> Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep,"

were not words put into the mouth of the first man by the author of our great epic poem as opinions springing from superstition. Nor can Addison, when he asserts, in the 12th and other numbers of the Spectator, his belief in this truth, be, any more than Milton, said to be conveying the opinions of others, or to be treating of mere superstitions.

CHAP. XXII.

JOURNEY FROM YAKOUTSK TO OCHOTSK — *continued.*

Recommence the Journey. — Fine Weather. — Grand Scenery. — Vegetation. — Elevated rocky Country. — Mists. — Streams. — Hunger of the Party. — Search for Bears. — Yakoute Triumph. — Precipitous Way. — Gloomy Prospect in respect to Food. — Abundance of Larch — Arrive at a Post. — Joy of our Horses. — Feast. — Cranberries. — Nothing to be got to carry away. — Renew our Journey. — Pass the River Allack. — A Swamp. — Recross the Allack. — Cross several Valleys. — A Glacier. — Descending towards the Lower Country. — Change in the Vegetation. — Valleys. — Streams. — Improvement in the Soil and the Vegetation. — Our Condition for Want of Food. — Consultation about killing a Horse for Food. — Opinion of the Yakoutes. — Duck and Bear Hunt. — Advantages of Hunger to Sportsmen. — Causes which attach the Indian to his Mode of Life. — Disappointment. — Success of the Chase. — Kill two Ducks.

After about six hours' repose, including the whole time of our stay at this encampment, we rose and took some tea, and ate only a few cold peas that were left of our supper of the last evening, and commenced the day's journey at a very little later hour than on ordinary occasions. The horses, also, had fared very badly during our stay here. They had found a few rhubarb plants, which they devoured very eagerly; but they had chiefly eaten the buds and tender twigs of the young spruce trees.

The morning was fine; and, as we proceeded, the scenery around us presented both grand and agreeable objects for contemplation. The vegetation was of the usual varieties of the fir tribes, including the cedar; and all the trees were in greater abundance, and of

firmer growth, and larger dimensions, than the average of those of the same species that we had seen in the plains. But whenever we found ourselves upon an elevation, by the rugged character of the ground, the hills and the magnificent volcanic peaks on all sides seemed to enclose us within a bowl which had no passage either to approach or to leave it, without climbing some one of the rugged mountains around.

After about two hours' march, we reached yet a higher elevation than that of the spot upon which we had passed the night. There was, nevertheless, here no distant view, on account of the narrower basin in which we seemed now enclosed; and there was but little vegetation around us, by reason of the rocky character of the ground.

After another hour, we commenced, almost imperceptibly, our descent of the principal range of these mountains. A thick mist received us, as we appeared to enter upon a new territory, but this soon turned to a warm, drizzling rain. In another hour the descent began to be precipitous and the way difficult. We now crossed several narrow and rapid streams, which were the sources of the tributary River Aldan, which falls into the Léna. After this, the descent became gradual; and at mid-day, we halted and took our *samovar* in another basin of the mountains, not dissimilar from that in which we had last slept.

The merchant and myself began now, it must be confessed, to be very hungry; and we no sooner alighted, than we took our guns in hand, and set off to perambulate the groves around, in the good hope of finding some beast or bird to shoot and make a meal upon; but finding none, we were forced to be contented with tea and sugar. The Yakoutes were evidently amused at our apparent impatience, as they sat very contentedly over their bark porridge. But they gave

us this consolation, that we should not want food in good and wholesome flesh very long, if we liked that of the bear, as we were approaching some of the favourite haunts of that beast in this district of the country.

We remained here but a short time. Upon renewing our march, we found the country rugged and undulating, and we crossed several rapid but narrow streams.

We did not again halt until near midnight; but the road the whole day had been so rugged and precipitous, and had so much abounded in torrents of difficult passage, that we did not suppose we could have made above thirty versts during sixteen hours of actual march. The place selected for repose was like that where we had passed the last night. But there was now a gloomier prospect before us than we had hitherto had to contemplate, on the score of food. Neither beast nor bird was to be found; and as far as the guides could judge, we were yet above twenty-five versts from the next post. We had, indeed, nothing whatever left, save one or two lumps of sugar. Had a bear, or some bird of any kind appeared, however gross for food, it would have excited in us the spirit of chase of the eagle in pursuit of his prey. The prospect for our horses, too, was not much better; for there was here neither the rhubarb plant nor the spruce tree. The few shrubs that were to be found were larches, the tender parts of which are inferior for animal diet to those of the spruce. But there was a little moss, which was probably all they would have to nourish them until the next evening. We, however, drank our tea, and retired in the full hope of being roused to hear of the approach of a bear some time during the night, or at least of hearing the chirrup of some one of the winged tribes in the morning.

The night, however, brought us no such welcome

visitor as we hoped to make a feast upon, and the morning opened without any sound of birds, either of song or of prey. When we arose, the atmosphere was full of cold dense vapours. We took our usual tea, and, fasting, once more mounted our horses, in the hope of reaching the next post before the day was far advanced.

As we proceeded, we found the country now abounding in larch. Sometimes we were ascending and sometimes descending; and as the way was difficult, our march was slow. Late in the afternoon, we reached the fourteenth post, called Allack Tinska, upon the River Allack, and about twenty-five versts, according to the judgment of the guides, from the place at which we had set out in the morning, and at 150 versts from the last post.

The joy of the horses, when they obtained the first glimpse of the Yakoute hut and the green meadow in which it stood, with a Tungouse wigwam beside it, seemed quite equal to our own; and as they increased their pace, they broke the silence of the *smotritel's* dwelling-place by loudly neighing all together until we alighted at the door of the hut.

The debt of gratitude which we owed the poor beasts from which we were now to separate, was scarcely less than that which we had felt towards those from which we last parted. Nothing, indeed, but the exploits of our horses in the swamps could have exceeded in devotion the patience and the spirits with which these animals had suffered hunger and fatigue during the passage of these difficult mountain passes. That which I rode upon this occasion, was the easiest-paced and gentlest of his species that I ever mounted. When we pressed their necks, in the same manner as with the last, as we handed them all over to the *smotritel,* with an injunction to let them feed as soon as possible, I remembered my distrust when I first saw

the shaggy coat and dwarf stature of that which I was to ride; and I could not help thinking of the difference we sometimes find between the first impressions made upon us by a new acquaintance of rough exterior, and the feelings with which we take leave of the same person, after attributes of a higher order than appearance have gained our respect and regard.

We would gladly have continued our march for four more hours, had we found any sort of provision here that we could have carried with us. Nevertheless, we had at our present disposition food for the whole party that was equal to the greatest luxuries that our imaginations had painted when hungry, and we could not fail to sup to-night, and breakfast to-morrow most sumptuously, if we stayed. No sooner, indeed, was our condition known to the Yakoute *smotritel*, than his wife descended into a kind of vault by the side of the hut, and brought up a large bowl full of milk; and we were scarcely at ease in the wigwam, which we chose to enter in preference to the hut, before a fine mess of cream, cranberries, and cedar nuts, was placed upon the ground before us. Of bread, indeed, there was none. But this was a luxury that we had had no expectation of finding. Our hopes had been chiefly set on beef, which the Yakoutes rarely want at any season, where there is any number of them together. The weather was wholly too hot during the middle of the day for the transport of cream to any distance, the thermometer being at 17 and 18 degrees; so we determined at any rate to remain here for the night. The dish upon which we supped was these good people's only constant food; and both the berries and the nuts which we ate were the product of the previous year. Sometimes the Yakoutes reduce the cream to a thick lumpy substance, which is similar to new cheese, and which we tasted the next day for the first time. For

the present we ate of the dish above mentioned in a manner proportioned to our great appetites after so long an abstinence, with the security of the past and further horse exercise, and the mixture of berries, against the consequences of indulging, after so long fasting, in food not the lightest and the safest for supper, perhaps, upon ordinary occasions.

The next morning we rose very early; and after breakfasting upon the same dish upon which we had supped, and feeling much the better for the two good meals, our Yakoutes filled some skins which they had provided for the purpose with cream, and another bag of somewhat smaller dimensions with cranberries, and a third with cedar nuts; and with this good provision we recommenced our journey.

There was little chance of attaining the next post, which was at the distance of above 200 versts, within four days with the most favourable weather; but as we were approaching a lower country, there was the greater prospect of killing something to supply our wants by the way; and if we should but be fortunate enough to meet with a bear, we had no doubt that we should be able to put an end to all our troubles on account of the condition of our larder.

We began the journey to-day by crossing the River Allack in the *smotritel's* canoe, while our horses swam. But soon after this we encountered another of those obstacles to the passage of travellers through this part of the country, with which we were so painfully familiar; and for three hours we were wading again in one of the worst description of swamps, and which we estimated at about five versts in breadth."

After passing this swamp, we found the country covered with the larch tree exclusively for twenty-five or thirty versts. About mid-day we stopped as usual, and took our *samovar* and a mess of cream. After

this, we recrossed the Allack lower down the stream, and continued our road along its shores until the evening, when we encamped upon a spot where we had a tolerable pasture for the horses, and where, before we slept, we finished the remainder of our cream, now well churned to the kind of cheese above mentioned.

We allowed ourselves but very little rest during this night, chiefly that we might have the greater chance of killing some ducks in the river in the morning. We had seen no birds, save a single blackbird, since the first days of our journey; but the guides informed us that all the rivers in this vicinity were occasionally visited by wild ducks at this season; and we were full of hope of getting a shot at some of them. Thus, after rising and taking our *samovar* at an early hour, and a few cranberries and cedar nuts which we had reserved, while the Yakoutes took their bark mess, now flavoured with a few cranberries, the merchant and myself set off to trace the banks of the river for two or three versts, in hopes of catching some unwary prey tranquilly sleeping; but we returned without having seen or heard the voice of any living creature fit for food or sport.

Early in this day's journey we crossed several valleys filled with snow, through which rivulets generally passed, and the courses of which we followed between walls of snow about twenty feet in height. In the middle of the day, we crossed a glacier of about five versts in breadth, and subsequently several smaller, honeycombed every where, and furnishing running streams, the beds of which were sometimes the ice and sometimes the solid ground; and we had here the same inconveniences as upon a previous occasion, from the excessive heat at noon and from the quantities of mosquitoes. The country around, too, presented the same bold features as that where we encountered the last glaciers, with several cones plainly of volcanic formation.

As we descended again very gradually towards the lower country, we found the vegetation much finer than any we had seen at the same elevation upon the opposite side of the mountains. The trees, chiefly, which we now observed flourishing along the sides of the hills by which we passed, were the larch, the mountain ash, and the lime. The larch was growing much more luxuriantly than we had any where before seen it. We observed some of these trees now with trunks large enough for the masts of small sea-vessels. The ash was small and thinly sown; but the limes most surprised us by their dimensions. Some of those that we measured were from forty-five to fifty-five inches in circumference.

We had a little rain during this day; but our road upon the whole was good; and when we thought we had made above sixty versts, we deemed it time to stop; and finding here a spot where our horses had by no means a bad pasture, we pitched our tent, took our *samovar*, and, for the second time during the journey, lay down to rest quite supperless and very hungry.

Early the next morning we passed over several streams, and several more broad valleys filled with snow. At mid-day we crossed the deepest stream we had yet met with, over a portion of which our horses had to swim, by which we were immersed, as on a previous occasion, up to our waists. This would have been a trouble to us at the beginning of our journey; but we had at this time seen too many similar, and still felt one that was much worse, to make any account of this—

> "Where the greater malady is fix'd,
> The lesser is scarce felt,"

— we were even suffering from the want of food, the greatest of all the evils that we at any time endured.

We found the soil of better quality, and the productions of the country more numerous, as we proceeded; and among the varieties of shrubs which abounded near the streams, we observed the rose, which was now in full bloom. We crossed however several more valleys filled with ice and snow, and similar to those we had before passed over; and we waded several more deep and rapid streams. Towards evening, we found the woods again wholly consisting of larch. At length, we encamped upon the bank of one of the streams, according to the judgment of our guides, about fifty versts from the next station.

Our condition for want of food we could not now disguise from ourselves, was becoming alarming, and as soon as the tent was erected, we held a formal council of all the party, to discuss seriously a question which we had already informally put to one another during the day, whether we should not kill one of the horses, to satisfy our craving appetites and escape all further risks; and I do not believe that any body of councillors of any crowned head in the world, whether full or fasting, or puffing the *chibooch* and dozing, ever discussed more dispassionately any vital question concerning the blood of their own species, than we deliberated upon and discussed this question, touching so nearly our own proper safety and interests, and the blood only of a single quadruped.

The Yakoutes pleaded the cause of the beasts upon the score of humanity, as we could not help thinking, by the manner in which they regarded our shaggy companions, while we talked of shedding the blood of one of them. For themselves, they made us understand, they never killed one of their horses, until they had passed five whole days together without any sort of food. It would be a shame, then, we said to each other, that while we had tea and a morsel of sugar, and the

prospect before us of better and more lawful food than horseflesh, to destroy one of the creatures given us to relieve and lighten our labour, and even to refine and embellish civilised life, and not to devour. It seemed as if it would be mere wantonness and gluttony. It would, at least, have been an act of which our semi-barbarous companions were not capable.

This important question being thus set at rest, the merchant and myself took our guns, and stole through the bushes by the side of the stream near which we were encamped, with our thoughts full now of the blood of an enemy instead of a friend of our species, and of that of the water fowl, both of which could not but be lawful food, and very good if we could get them. And we determined to practise all the cunning we were masters of, in this attempt to supply, if it were possible, our natural wants.

As we advanced slowly and cautiously, sometimes approaching the edge of the wood upon our hands and knees, and peeping at intervals between the bushes, to see if any thing were floating upon the stream, I thought I never enjoyed sport so keenly before.

When we rise twice or thrice a day from a full meal, we cannot be in a right frame either of body or mind for the proper enjoyments of the chase. Our sluggish spirits then want the true incentive to action, which should be hunger, with the hope before us of filling a craving stomach. I could remember once before being for a time dependent upon the gun for food, and feeling a touch of the charm of savage life —for every condition of humanity has its good as well as its evil—but never till now did I fully comprehend the attachment of the sensitive, not drowsy Indian, to his manner of living, which is found nevertheless to be so great, that though the years of his race, as he cannot but know, are already numbered,

by reason of his refusing to adopt the mode of life of the civilised man, yet he will persist rather than sow and reap, or attempt to acquire any of the useful arts which we practise. This, indeed, is a trait in the character of the wild man, which those who labour to reclaim and save his race from extinction, appear to have studied far too little. Touch but the passions which the chase excites, which are the very essence of his being, by other motives to action, and cease at the same time to fill his mind with revolting terrors and with gloomy impressions of futurity, such as are taught by very good, but often, certainly, very weak-minded men, and who shall say that all we wish to effect may not be accomplished?

As we skulked along the banks of the brook, under cover of the bushes, peeping out and surveying the stream at intervals, the slightest noise caused by the wind, or by the running waters, as it reached our ears, instantly filled our imaginations with the liveliest images that hunger and hope could produce. One minute we thought we heard the splashing of the wings of a whole flock of ducks alighting upon the water, and the next we seemed to perceive, half concealed by the dusky firs that crowded the shores upon the opposite side of the river, a fine fat bear drinking securely at the stream. The most hungry wolves never sought more eagerly for a lamb quenching its thirst at a brook, nor the wiliest snake to catch a nobler prey sleeping, than we now sought if perchance we might find a bear drinking within our reach, or ducks floating tranquilly upon the surface of the water.

While we were thus intently bent upon our object, suddenly the sound of the voice of some bird or other, whose note we did not recognise, reached our attentive ears. We now pressed the ground yet more gingerly than ever; and presently we observed a blackbird

skipping from tree to tree and from branch to branch, among the tall firs around us. Our attention thus drawn from the pursuit of worthier prey, was now fixed upon this poor bird; and lest she should escape us, we determined that we would both fire at her together. Whether it were that it was her hour of rest, and we had disturbed her, and she was not yet well awake, we observed that she had not her natural voice, and that she had no fear of us. With a note more like that of the magpie than that common to her own species, she flew towards us, and perched upon a tree within less than half gun-shot from the spot upon which we were standing. Yet so eager were we to obtain this delicate morsel for our supper, that we persisted still in firing at the same moment; and the triggers were no sooner pulled than the massacre was accomplished. But in the name of all the spirits of the wood, of what chagrin to us was it not the cause! At the report of our guns, a brace of ducks from beneath the very banks of the river upon which we trod, rose from the water, and passing within shot of us, flew further up the stream. We seemed like merchants who, upon the loss of a ship, should be found to have insured only her jolly-boat, which had floated safely on shore. And again, upon picking up our prey, we had the misfortune to find that one-half of the little bird was shot away into the air, and the other half so mangled, that it would not have made half a meal for a sparrow hawk; while, without making any account of the Yakoutes, we had to divide it between two men with more eager appetites than the most ravenous eagles.

Renewed hopes and fresh excitement, however, soon possessed us. We had at least seen a brace of fine ducks that, we agreed, appeared, as they flew by us, as fat and plump as if they had been bred in some royal aviary, or park; and they were still perhaps not

far from us. Thus we loaded again, and renewed our pursuit with increased cunning and caution, excited by fresh and greater hopes. Not a fox in the country could have excelled us in these necessary accomplishments for the ends we had in view. And now, after creeping for a few hundred yards, and peeping out upon the river at every opening, we again espied the object of our renewed labours, the two ducks, floating and stemming the current in the middle of the stream. I never wished to be invisible till now, nor longed to have even such wings only as those of Cupid, or of Ariel, or of some sylph, to lighten a little the pressure of the hands and knees upon the ground.

At length, after creeping on as close to the earth as serpents in sight of *their* prey, we reached an advantageous spot from which to take our aim, without having caused any alarm. As we were not quite close together, and the ducks were swimming apart from each other, and we dared not speak for fear of disturbing them, we settled by signs which each of us should aim at; and in a minute the triggers were drawn, both shots were fatal, and the ducks turned on their backs.

But our prey was not yet secured. The current which the birds had been stemming while they were swimming was strong, and the instant they turned over they began to drift rapidly down the stream. But at perceiving this, we both plunged into the water, and after wading for a short distance, found ourselves swimming. However after a good *ducking*—a very appropriate term, from whatever it may be derived—we finally secured our prey, and we had the satisfaction to find they were two black ducks, and quite as fat as they had seemed. Need it be said, upon what a brave mess of *stchee* we supped this evening, and with what new vigour we were inspired for the prosecution of our next day's journey?

CHAP. XXIII.

JOURNEY FROM YAKOUTSK TOWARDS OCHOTSK—*continued.*

Repose with Hopes for the Morrow.—Glacial Plains.—Broad and deep Streams.—Change in the Face of the Country and the Vegetation.—Obstruction of the Streams.—Rugged Ground.—Terror of our Horses of the Bear.—Fruitless Search for Bears.—Arrival at a Post.—Relief.—Cream, Cranberries, and Cedar Nuts.—Restless Night.—Mosquitoes.—Disappointment in renewing our Travelling Stock.—Intelligence of the advanced Party of the Caravan.—Heat.—Stony Streams.—Flatter Country.—Morass.—Experiment to try the Courage of the Yakoutes.—Unsatisfactory Solution of the Question at present.—Stimulated to Exertion by Hunger.—Vegetation.—Larch.—Flowers.—Currants.—Delight of our Men at finding Sour Currants.—A Bear Hunt.—Torrents.—Conjecture concerning the Cause of the Vegetation here.—Streams.—Indications of Approach to the Sea.—Come up with the Advance of the Caravan.—Their Loss of Two or Three Men and One Horse killed by the Bear.—Tale of Woe.

ALTHOUGH it was long after midnight before we lay down upon the night of our duck feast, we rose at an early hour for the next day's march; and while the Yakoutes were preparing the horses, we took our accustomed *samovar*. The grateful beverage seemed to us this morning more refreshing than ever; and we commenced the day's march under the favourable auspices of fine weather, and with the cheering hope of attaining the next post before the close of the day.

During the first portion of this day's march, we passed over several glacial plains similar to those which have been described. After these, we crossed one or two streams that were broader and deeper than any we had met with since we passed the highest ridge of

the mountains. The face of the country and the vegetation, also, were much changed, and our descent was now more apparent. Instead of the varieties in kind among the trees and shrubs of the climate, which had lately been so great a relief to our weary sight, the larch here entirely covered the ground; and the trees were of a finer growth than those which we had seen mingled among the varied productions of the better soils, or the more elevated lands.

At noon we reposed as usual for an hour; and after renewing our march, we found still the same country and the same obstructions of running streams and rugged ground, which continued to impede our progress.

A single incident only upon this day's journey relieved the tediousness of the march. Our horses had been constantly raising alarm by their terror of the bears, and exhibiting to us the inconsistencies in the composition of their character. They daily faced dangers that were a thousand times greater than any to be dreaded on account of the bears, and displayed attributes for which we deify our own species; and yet the mere scent of their furred enemy of the forest reduced them to the most timid of the four-footed tribes. Our chief guide's horse, which was first in the order of march, now at a particular spot where the underwood was thick, was seized with more alarm than usual; and spreading his terror through the troop by his snorting, and his determination to go no further in that direction, brought us all to a stand. The alarm of the animals was now indeed so much greater than at any time before while we were in their company, that we thought we had got at last exactly what we desired, and we made our dispositions to profit by the hazard. We turned a little back upon our steps, and tied all the beasts to the same tree, and left one of the Yakoutes to guard them and keep them quiet, while the rest of us returned to

the expected combat. With our various national arms, the Yakoutes refusing two pistols which we could spare, and offered them, we now scoured the wood around with every reasonable hope of the heart of a bear for our dinner; for our number and our weapons were sufficient to leave but a poor chance to any animal not very quick indeed, of doing any one of us an injury, or of escaping after he might be within our reach. But after a full hour's search, no sign of any habitant of the forest whatever was to be seen or heard. Nevertheless, we had still great trouble in leading our horses past the spot at which they had taken the alarm. By coaxing and caressing, however, and firing pistols, which seemed more effective than any thing else, we succeeded. But we had no sooner remounted them, after we were twenty or thirty yards past the dreaded spot, than it required at least as much exertion to restrain their quick onward march, as we had just made to oblige them to continue their way. The opinion of the Yakoutes was, that a bear had been sleeping at this place, and had gone off before our approach; but we found no signs of any thing of the kind; and as Nature had not given us the some olfactory sensitiveness that she had bestowed upon our *chevaline* companions, we were still too hungry to allow of our losing the time that the pursuit would require without any such guide to direct our search.

The manner in which the Yakoutes face the bear has been before described. These men informed us, that it was very rarely indeed that any of their people were killed by this ferocious animal, but that they were frequently slightly, and sometimes severely wounded after they had closed with him and given him his mortal blow. One of themselves, indeed, had had his left arm lacerated and his shoulder scarred by one of these fierce beasts.

At length, after four days of fatiguing march since we quitted the last post, at about six o'clock this evening we reached the river and station of Tudomo Krestowskaya. We found here a very obliging Yakoute *smotritel*; and as soon as our most pressing want was known, his wife, who was to our minds the prettiest as well as the best-natured woman we had seen since we entered the Yakoute country, set immediately to work to provide for us the best fare in her power; and after taking the usual leave of our noble beasts, we entered the hut.

These good people were lodged in a rather curious sort of dwelling, in construction and appearance something between a Yakoute ordinary hut and a Tungouse wigwam. It was of the same hexagonal form of which we had already observed several, and open at the top of the pointed roof; but in other respects it was like the wigwam. It was nevertheless divided into two parts; and of one of these we were offered exclusive possession. We were not, however, disposed to take advantage of this; and before we had time to seat ourselves upon the benches under the walls around the general apartment, the hostess reappeared with a plentiful supply of the same dish of cream, cranberries, and cedar nuts, that we had so much enjoyed at the last station, but which, though excellent, and ample for all our present wants, gave us but little hopes of finding a supply of more suitable articles for our next day's journey.

We did not pass a very agreeable night at this post, on account of the mosquitoes, which were here in such clouds, that the good people were obliged to keep constant fires of cattle manure alight in the middle of the wigwam, the odour and half-stifling effects of which made us regret that we had not pitched our own tent.

In the morning, although we had not had much hope

of being well provisioned for the next day's march, we were a little disappointed, when over the same dish at breakfast as that upon which we had supped, to find that there was nothing whatever to be procured to add to the three components of which our late and early meal consisted. We did, however, obtain a few more of the cranberries to carry with us than upon the last occasion; and, although these are not very good food without cream, they conserve better than any thing else. Thus the beginning at least of the journey before us would be more favourable than the last. And besides this, the distance was happily shorter, and, the rivers permitting, the journey would occupy a day less. Moreover, we had here the satisfaction to learn, that the advance party of the merchant's caravan had only left this post the day before our arrival, which rendered it probable that we should overtake them in about two days at the furthest; and they, we knew, had provisions even among the articles of their merchandise.

We left this station at an earlier hour than we usually commenced our day's march, bent upon making every effort to overtake the merchant's advanced party, if it were possible, before the close of the next day. During the first part of the morning we were enveloped in a dense mist; but as the day advanced the atmosphere became clear, and the thermometer at noon was at 19 degrees of heat, which was the highest to which it rose at any time during our journey.

Our progress was slower to-day, notwithstanding our efforts, than it had been during the two or three preceding days, owing to the number of stony streams that lay in our way. We had sometimes to follow the courses of these for a verst or two, as well as to cross at intervals from side to side; so that when we stopped to repose for an hour, after seven or eight hours of

march, our guides did not think we had made above twenty versts. Our journey was, nevertheless, now across a country less hilly than any we had seen since we arrived at the foot of the western range of the mountains; and the distant view in our front presented hills of less altitude than those which we were leaving behind us.

During the latter half of this day, the obstructions to our march became greater; and for four or five hours we were once more involved in a low morass, to the difficulties of the passage of which, one instance only could be compared, among all those we had experienced, since the commencement of our journey from Yakoutsk. We had accomplished, however, as we believed, about forty five versts, when we encamped, as we were accustomed to do whenever it was in our power, upon the bank of a clear stream.

We had this evening the opportunity of making a little experiment, for the purpose of solving some doubts in our minds concerning a report of the Yakoute character. A remark has been already made, upon the manner in which the very soul of this people seems to have succumbed to the genius and authority of their conquerors. Such, indeed, is the apparent character of their submission, that an opinion prevails among even Russians that have lived among them, that they are arrant cowards. This impression, as we became acquainted with the men who accompanied us, appeared to be so inconsistent with our knowledge of their readiness to face the bear so badly armed, that it was a frequent subject of conversation with us upon the journey, and we had some time since determined, that in case we should find any opportunity, we would endeavour to ascertain the correctness of the Russian opinion, or the error upon which it might be founded; and a little circumstance which seemed to make the oc-

casion favourable for the experiment, happened this evening while we were over our *samovar*, and the Yakoutes were around the fire.

Many, even of those who have lived or sojourned for a season in thinly-peopled countries, or in the woods, and have seen more clearly and felt more impressively the dependence of man upon man, than those who have not seen the phases in the varied degrees and shades of human society which different modes of life exhibit, although they may have lost the superfluous portions of the arrogance of rank throughout its grades, and learned to respect equally every man who performs worthily the part which fortune has assigned him, may nevertheless have experienced the inconveniences attending a relaxation of self-importance, where the peculiarity of the case has not seemed to warrant what at other times might have been both politic and commendable. Our Yakoutes were at all times attentive to their duties, though they did not neglect their amusements. During the time of leisure, and frequently on the way, they diverted themselves by singing; and though their notes seemed to us to be monotonous, and not worth listening to on their own account, we deemed them proofs of the cheerful disposition of the people; and where there is cheerfulness, who shall fear treachery, or the consequences of any evil passion? Several times, however, during our sufferings from hunger, we had some suspicions that there was a little more than quite harmless cheerfulness in their songs. We thought, that we traced through indescribable signs, not merely exultation, but even some contempt of us, on account of the superiority they possessed in relation to the prosecution of the labour in which we were together engaged, in having a dish always at hand, by which they could at least escape the immediate consequences of hunger. But the manner in which they were singing and talk-

ing over their mess on this occasion, at the time we were over our *samovar* in our tent, convinced us that we had not been mistaken, and that our familiarity with our friends had had the effect of so relaxing their respect, as to induce them to ridicule us in their songs. In fact, we were in reality offended; and we chose the opportunity to try the truth of the impression prevalent concerning the character of their race, and whether they really had the awe they were stated to have of civilised man, such as we considered ourselves, or whether it were rather the law in cool blood that they dreaded.

Our plan having been agreed upon, was thus put into execution. We issued rather suddenly from the tent without our pistols at our girdles, and while we spoke some rough words to the men in our own several tongues, myself, as the least likely, from being a foreigner, to strike them with any terror of the law, advanced to where they were seated, and seized the shaggy hair of the heads of two of them that were sitting together, while my companion, not to make the menace too great, stood like a witness merely of what occurred, though ready to aid in case of any opposition to this apparent violence. But the very instant the act was done, the whole frames of these two powerful men shook, while the two men that were seated opposite to them sat still and seemed to experience hardly less trepidation than their comrades. Thus it was settled, at all events, that at so trifling a menace from two men, one of whom was not even a Russian, four Yakoutes were reduced to the condition of the lamb in the claws of the wolf. In a future chapter will appear the reason for this particular account of this circumstance.

We allowed ourselves, upon this night, but a very few hours of repose. Hunger disposed, and hope stimulated us to make all possible exertions to come up

with the party we were following; and as our horses had here very good pasture at night, there was no let to our efforts upon their account.

The district through which we now passed abounded in stony torrents; but in other respects, the travelling was better than it had been at any time since we encountered the first obstructions to our journey; and the face of the country began here to wear a more cheerful and agreeable aspect. For the endless firs, sown over the whole surface of the ground, in larger or smaller quantities depending upon the character and quality of the soil and the elevation of the country, and exhibiting only the little varieties of colour and foliage which their several tribes admit, we had now around us a mixture of the several perennial green-leafed trees that have been mentioned as growing in spare quantities in different parts of the country through which we passed during the journey, with a larger proportion of the limes of more luxuriant growth. Along the banks of some of the brooks, we now found strawberries; and here and there we perceived open spaces covered with a variety of shrubs, among which were mingled currant bushes, the fruit of which, though not sufficiently advanced to exhibit colour, was evidently of the red sort. Our men were in raptures of delight at the sight of this fruit even in its present state, and they picked and ate quantities of it: but we reserved our appetites for something more solid in prospect. A variety of flowers were also seen flourishing here among the brambles and underwood, amidst which the rose and the flag-iris were predominant.

This change in the appearance of the country and the vegetation, was as unexpected as it was agreeable to us, seeing that we had yet scarcely recrossed the 60th degree of latitude, and it seemed to make some amends for our physical deprivations. It was easy to

perceive from the timidity and fretfulness of our horses, which now required constant encouragement to persuade them to proceed, that the bear had also a particular inclination, if not for the beauties of nature here exhibited in the vegetable world in so much greater profusion than generally in this snowy land, at least for the fruits with which the country abounded.

We reposed to-day at an earlier hour than usual, upon the banks of a fresh torrent, which abounded on both sides with the shrubs and flowers above-mentioned, in full bloom; and such was the weather and the temperature of the atmosphere, that it was difficult to reconcile our experience of the past and that of the present, and the latitude in which we were, which, if we did not take into account other influences than those which at first appear, seemed full of contradictions and inconsistencies. Perhaps, this fine portion of country, which we found afterwards of limited extent, may owe its verdure to the prevalence of calms arising from its position being that at which the winds from the sea encounter those from the mountains, which in several other countries it has fallen to my lot to observe, has a remarkable influence on climate.

Early in the afternoon we came to a stream, the bed of which we made our road; and after crossing it four or five times with not much difficulty, we were once more well immersed in attaining the bank, where we resumed our direct path towards the coast.

Before the fourth hour after noon on this day, a strong, chilly, damp wind blowing from the south-east, met us, and was the first announcement of our approach to the sea. The country continued to exhibit the same aspect and the same vegetation as we advanced; and after a march of seventeen hours, we had the satisfaction of coming up with the advance of the merchants'

caravan which we had so anxiously longed and so ardently striven to overtake.

The men had just discharged their beasts, and were preparing their meal as we joined them. The meeting upon our side was one of unmingled satisfaction, until we perceived the whole party which had crowded around us, were under the influence of some lively trouble, for which, indeed, we soon found that they had full cause. They had lost no less than two of their men and one of their horses, upon the previous day, by the bear, and had another of their men still missing, who they feared had experienced the fate of the other two.

The tale of woes, as it was related to us, was as follows:—Upon the party, who were all natives, mustering their horses in the morning previous to that of the present day, they found one of them missing, and to search for which one of the men remained behind after the departure of the rest. But as this man did not make his appearance as expected, soon after the departure of the party, two of his companions returned, in order to discover the cause of his detention or aid his search for the missing horse. In the mean time, the rest continued their march until they stopped for their accustomed hour of repose at noon, when, neither of the men that had returned upon their steps appearing, the cause of their absence was discussed, and there being little doubt that some accident or other had happened, three more of the men, as the rest resumed their journey, retraced also the steps of the caravan, determined at all events to solve the mystery. These men saw and heard nothing either of the missing man or the rest, until their arrival at the spot where the caravan had passed the night. But after now commencing a search in the wood around, they very soon stumbled upon an enormous bear, occupied in tearing and eating one of the men. Horrified at the sight,

they attacked the ferocious beast without an instant's hesitation, and two of their poniards were fixed in his breast before he had time to spring from his hind legs, upon which he had raised himself to meet his enemies. The bear was no sooner dispatched, than they found the body of another of their companions, whose internal parts had been drawn out and devoured. The two slain men proved to be the one that had remained and one of those that had first returned. Moreover, at a few paces from the spot upon which they found one of the men, lay also the carcass of the missing horse. But of the other man of the first two that had returned, they found no trace, and no one knew any thing about him up to the time we joined them; but it was supposed that he had met the same fate as his companions, from some other bear of parallel strength. Nor had he, indeed, been found, dead or alive, nearly a month after this, when the last detachment of the caravan reached the coast.

After what I had heard of the dexterity of the Yakoutes in their combats with the bear, I was much surprised at this account of the death of two of them, who had evidently not wanted courage, and killed, too, by the same beast. But when the skin of the animal that the conquerors had brought with them was shown to us, it appeared that their enemy was of such an enormous size, that we wondered rather at the courage of any man whatever, in attacking him with nothing but the miserable native weapon. The Yakoutes themselves acknowledged, that this bear was of a size that many among them, single-handed, would not have attacked. But they conjectured, that the first man that was killed, enraged at seeing the animal devouring his horse, had, under too much excitement, used his weapon awkwardly, while the bear was probably more furious than on ordinary occasions, on account of being at the

time over his prey; and the same reasons, exaggerated they thought in the case of the second man, by his seeing the animal tearing his companion, had produced similar results. It appeared, however, that the bear had received one wound only previously to that by which he was killed.

After we had heard the gloomy tale of this unfortunate accident, we supped with the captain of the party, upon the real luxuries of biscuit and the very same sort of dry chips of mutton which we had despised until we had none left, and peas; after which, we pitched our tent near one of the fires that were blazing, and lay down to rest.

CHAP. XXIV.

JOURNEY FROM YAKOUTSK TOWARDS OCHOTSK—*continued.*

Storm at Night.—Set out under more favourable Auspices than usual.—Generosity tempered with Prudence.—Ascend another Range of Hills.—Narrow Plains.—A fertile Valley.—Forests.—Varieties of Shrubs.—The Rose.—Encamp by a Stream.—Terror of our Horses of the Bear.—Yakoute Hut.—A native Hunter.—Capital Fare.—Swallows.—Dogs.—Encamp by the Huts.—Renew our Journey at a late Hour.—Hills.—View of the Mountains of Ochota.—Woody Plains.—River Ochota.—Encamp by a Brook.—Chalky-coloured Stream.—Hungry Man and Dogs amidst Plenty.—Difficult Passage of the Ochota.—Theory respecting the Rise and Fall of the River.—Torrents.—Stony Streams.—Larch.—Birches.—Second Pass of the Ochota.—Encamp.—Illness of one of our Guides.—Terror of the Horses at the Bear.—Second Passage of the River.—Country less fertile.—Third Passage of the River.—Arrival at Ochotsk.—Yakoute Words.

During the night that we were encamped with the advanced party of the caravan, there was a severe thunder-storm and heavy rain; but, at the hour at which we usually commenced the day's journey, the weather was fine, and we left the party, to resume our march under more favourable auspices than we had set out for several preceding days. Not only were we now furnished with such coarse necessaries as we had a just right to claim, but at the moment of our departure, the captain of the detachment presented to us a portion of a great sterlet pie, with which his wife had provided him for his own use, before he left Yakoutsk; saying at the same time, that he had been unwilling to tempt us when we arrived, with what he

was sure we should, under the effects of hunger, have used as intemperately as his horses would their food, were they put loose in a fresh pasture upon ending a day's journey, and suffered afterwards the bad consequences which always attend excess.

The first fifteen versts of our way after we renewed our journey, lay across the same fertile country as that over which we had passed on the preceding day. But our progress was greatly impeded, in some places by pits of mud, and at others by the streams which were full of larger stones, and deeper and not less rapid than those over which we had passed upon the more elevated lands.

After this, we ascended another range of hills of no great altitude, but where we found several narrow plains locked in by surrounding peaks, and full of snow and ice. They appeared like the beds of ancient lakes from which the water had been drawn off, after some change in the geological configuration of the country.

After descending this range of hills, we came into a vale of extreme fertility. The green and broad-leafed trees that chiefly flourished here, were the lime and the birch; of the hardier species of the fir tribes which were more familiar to our eyes, we observed only the larch. But the forest was the more remarkable from its affording the first instance which we met with of any trees indicating age. The wood was open, and the trunks of some of the limes were from three to four feet in circumference, and the branches were much larger than the proportion which is usual to that size of trunk in most forest trees, but they had very few small boughs, and very little fresh foliage.

Along the banks of a slow rivulet by which our path lay, we observed shrubs of various kinds in full bloom, and growing with such luxuriance as in several places to obscure the view of the stream. Among these, the

rose-trees were predominant. In many instances they reached to seven or eight feet in height.

In the evening, we pitched our tent as usual by a running stream. But we had much trouble on this occasion until midnight, arising from the terror of our horses of the bears. The poor beasts seemed to have their natural enemies continually in their minds. It was our custom to make but a small fire until the time of going to bed, in order that if any of the ferocious animals, after peeping out of the wood, should be curious to know more of us, they might not be deterred from approaching near enough to give us an opportunity of trying the superior virtue of our arms over those of the men of the same forest in which they were bred. But as the underwood was here much thicker than usual around us, this seeming want of caution did not meet the approbation of our quadruped companions, and we were tormented by their fears until we made two or three good fires.

The first part of the next day's march was across a country similar to that which we last passed over. After five or six hours' travelling, we came to the banks of a broad part of the River Ora, which we had several times previously crossed where it was but a shallow and narrow stream. We found a Yakoute here in one of the little huts of sexangular form, and with a canoe, in which we passed the river while our horses were driven across in the usual manner.

There was another hut of the same description, upon the side of the stream upon which we landed; and the good man who inhabited it, invited us to enter, and partake of a meal of the best refreshment he had to offer.

The arrangement of this Yakoute's dwelling excited our curiosity, on account of its differing from that of all of his race that we had hitherto seen. It was of the

ordinary form, and was furnished with the same kind of mud benches as the rest. But instead of the usual emptiness of the huts in which we had previously reposed, the walls of this were hung with all sorts of trophies of the chase. Bears', wolves', and foxes' heads, and the branched horns of rein-deer, were suspended around; upon lines drawn across the hut above our heads, was hanging a quantity of dried salmon; and upon several shelves were placed water-vessels made of birch-bark, and perfectly similar to those used by the North American Indians.

The meal to which we now sat down, consisted of salmon soup or stew, which had been cooked out of doors in the lid of an iron pot, and was served up in the same remnant, probably of a perfect vessel, which these Yakoutes had once possessed. This novel mess, however, was a great luxury to us, and with the use of wooden spoons of our host's own handiwork, we made an excellent meal.

The confidence with which the swallows take up their abode in the Yakoute huts, and the Tungouse wigwams, that are open at the top, is remarkable. Here four families of this species of the winged tribes had built their nests within our reach; and they were so much accustomed to human company in the dwelling which they had chosen, that they continued to fly backwards and forwards, to bring food to their young ones, which were unfledged in the nests, while we stood close by them. We observed that their colour differed from that of the several varieties of their species commonly seen in Europe. Instead of being of the nicely mingled hues of the blue, and black, and purple of our swallows, their dark plumage was universally tinged with a dusky red.

The more than ordinary approach to comfort that we found here, caused us to make some inquiries before we

quitted this hut; and we learned that its inhabitants were especially expert, and had been very successful, in their hunts for the bear in particular, by which they had always an article of commerce to exchange with the merchants that passed by.

Upon renewing our march, we found precisely the same country as that over which we had passed during the earlier part of the day; and in the evening we reached the post of Metinska, at 200 versts from the last at which we had changed, and within fifty-four versts of the haven in which were centred all our hopes of the termination of our arduous journey.

The Yakoute *smotritel* we found here, was lodged in a hut of the usual hexagonal form, and deeply set in the ground; but he had opposite his door two other huts, which, unaccustomed as we were to see even two houses together, presented to us quite the appearance of a little settlement. But if this people want the advantages of society of their own species, they certainly live, whether that want be the cause of this or not, upon the best terms with the winged tribes we have just seen, which are found every where within and without their dwellings. Here the swallows were as abundant as any where; and they were still tamer than those we saw at the last Yakoute dwelling at which we had stopped. Several of the little winged families had their nests within and without the huts, no higher than five feet from the ground; and they were so familiar with our species, that when we took some of the squalling unfledged ones in our hands, it seemed to cause no alarm to the parents, which continued to make their flights backwards and forwards through the air, and ever and anon to return and feed their crying offspring that remained in the nest, while we stood by with the others in our hands.

But there was here a greater novelty to us than

this, a regular pack of the travelling dogs of the country, which we now saw for the first time. The dogs are not, indeed, generally used for travelling, further westward in Siberia than the foot of the mountains over which we had passed.

I shall only at present remark concerning these animals, that it appeared to me that the Siberian dog increased in fierceness at every town as we advanced eastward, from the time of crossing the Ural Mountains until our arrival at Irkoutsk, where none are upon any account allowed to run loose. In general, even in Western Siberia, the dogs are tied up in the yards; but this practice was not there universal. These dogs, however, are of a different race, as we shall afterwards more fully see; and those we now first saw were loose, and were lying strewed round the house; and whether asleep or awake, took no notice whatever either of ourselves or our horses.

As the Yakoutes' huts here were by no means inviting to enter, and the weather was fine, we preferred pitching our tent to passing the night within either of them; and after partaking abundantly of the truly national dish of the Yakoutes, the cream and the berries, with which we were now becoming quite familiar, we reposed, as we were accustomed to do, upon our fresh beds of spruce boughs.

The next day, some difficulty about our horses delayed us, and we did not recommence our journey before a late hour in the morning. Soon after leaving this post, we ascended a range of hills, that form towards the north some ridges of considerable altitude, which are known by the name of the Ochota Mountains. When we were at the highest elevation we attained during the passage of them, we had a far fairer and more extensive view than we had at any time obtained while we were in the mountains over which we had

previously passed. In the direction of the country into which we were advancing, appeared a fine wooded plain as far as the bounds of vision, in which the deep green foliage with which it was covered, was relieved by the occasional view of some part of the River Ochota, while the rest remained concealed by the serpentine course of the stream and the undulations of the ground. In the direction of the north, the high and irregular form of the above-mentioned mountains terminated the view; while in that of the south appeared an undulating country; and towards that from which we came, a wooded plain, which seemed bounded by an irregular range of mountain peaks.

After a difficult descent from these hills, we encamped in the plain which commenced at their base, according to our invariable custom whenever in our power, by the side of a fresh-running stream.

The next morning, as we advanced we found the fertility of this plain greater than that of any portion of the country through which our path had hitherto lain. Early in the day we passed by several Yakoute huts, where we were plentifully supplied with cream. The distances from one another at which the several families that inhabited these houses were dwelling, in the midst of a country where there is no scarcity of pasture to maintain their cattle, which furnish the sole means of their subsistence, seemed indicative of their race being of a gloomy and unsocial disposition. We believed this, however, not to be the case; and we made inquiries of them why they lived so far apart. But in reply we heard only the same reasons that are often given in very different countries, for the conservation of usages that ought long since to have been abolished, that such was the custom of their fathers.

Attached to all the houses that we passed by, after crossing the last hills, there were larger portions of

pasture-ground than we had before seen; and the grass, though of a coarse description, was here growing most luxuriantly. By the stream, the abundance of the wild productions of the several kinds with which we were familiar, still more surprised us. The rose-bushes, which were every where in great plenty, were in some instances from six to nine feet in height. Early in the day, we crossed several times a stream of a chalky colour; and we observed that, wherever the stones broke its smooth course, appeared a foam like soap-suds, which covered the surface of the water as far down as the eye could reach.

Before noon, we arrived at the bank of the main stream of the Ochota, the entire waters of which were of the same colour as those of the streams just mentioned. It was necessary for us to cross the river at this point, on account of the country on its right bank abounding in the same morasses and swamps from which we had suffered so much during the earlier stages of our journey, although it would be soon equally necessary to recross it to avoid the same obstructions upon the opposite side, and afterwards even to cross it for a third time, before arriving at the termination of the journey.

We found a hut here inhabited by one of the natives, who was living quite alone, and who had no cattle whatever, and was almost in a starving state, with a pack of dogs that were as nearly as possible reduced to skeletons. And this, too, was by the side of a river that had probably more salmon in it at this very time, as it will be afterwards shown, than any river in the world has of any fish at any season. But the Yakoute had neither nets, nor hooks and lines, and obtained only such fish as the current threw on shore. How he lived through the winter we could not learn from him; and his appearance and the reception he

gave us, were not such as to make us feel much interest in his affairs.

We encountered here some difficulty and some detention, on account of the state of the river. The Ochota is subject to sudden swellings, arising from two very different causes, and which are not on that account to be foreseen. If the rains are heavy on the higher lands, the river swells with rapidity; and if the sky is without a cloud, the same effect is produced by the melting of the snow and the ice in the elevated valleys from which the sources of the river proceed. Thus, the water will rise to a great height, and fall again, sometimes twice in the course of the twenty-four hours. But the season of the full influence of these causes and effects is but of short duration; for with the first night-frosts, which usually take place in the middle of August, the condensed mists which hang over the mountains fall in snow, and the glaciers cease to melt, when the river becomes low, and its breadth equal, save for about four of the twenty-four hours, during which the waters still rapidly rise and fall, from the effects of the mid-day sun upon the snow and ice in the less elevated lands. The breadth, generally, of the Ochota at this pass is less than a verst; but it was at this time more than two versts, and the current was running with such rapidity that the horses could not be put into the stream without great risk of losing them.

After three or four hours' detention, however, the river rapidly fell, and the current was so much diminished in force, that we crossed very easily in the half-starved Yakoute's little canoe, and swam our horses without much difficulty or risk.

Soon after passing the main stream of this principal river, which falls into the Ochotsk Sea, we crossed several torrents of the kind to which we were well accustomed. The soil and the vegetation which we found

after passing the Ochota, were the same as those which have been last mentioned. Here, however, we remarked that the most venerable of all the trees were the birches. The larch was equal in size to any to be found upon the western coast of the continent of America in the latitudes between 47 and 50 degrees.

As we proceeded, the stony streams continued to obstruct our progress, and the waters in them were now increased in breadth and strength. About two hours before the time at which we usually encamped, we came to the second pass of the Ochota, where we found the river divided into two channels. Here there was neither native nor canoe; and it was necessary that we should find a ford over which we might pass with our horses. But before we discovered a favourable place for wading, we met two of the natives mounted, who, though they pointed out to us a ford, informed us at the same time, that one of them in crossing had been swept into the broad waters where the channels unite, and had with difficulty saved his horse. Partly, therefore, to avoid the risk of losing ours, and partly on account of the sickness of one of our men, from which he was suffering much, we determined upon encamping here for the night, in the hope of there being some diminution of the flood, and that our sick man would be better the next day. Thus, after marking the line to which the water now reached, that we might know in the morning how much it had risen or fallen, we pitched our tent.

The complaint of the Yakoute was very similar to that by which the captain of our boat upon the Léna had been attacked, and is supposed by the natives to be peculiar to the country. It manifests itself in a swollen throat and tongue, which, when exaggerated, prevents respiration. This man's tongue was so swollen that he was unable to speak; but it appeared to me that he

had but very little fever: his disease was probably the influenza.

The immediate spot which we had found the most convenient for our encampment, was about twenty paces from the high bank of the torrent, and was a perfect bed of flowers, composed of the several kinds which have been before mentioned as abounding in this plain. It proved, however, to my companions and myself more like a bed of thorns; for we had very little rest, owing to the more than ordinary alarm of our horses, on account of their ferocious enemies of the forest, both before and after they were tethered to feed. We had been so often, as we thought, disturbed without reason, that we had grown indifferent to the claims of our beasts to our care. Neither was it very prudent to be hunting for bears amid the dense beds of underwood and shrubs and flowers that surrounded us, even with any weapon whatever; for that savage animal is not without a portion of the attribute in which the fox has the credit of excelling all the beasts of the forest, and must be cautiously dealt with, whatever may be the weapon by which he is to be encountered. Our Yakoutes upon this occasion, however, were doubly careful in regard to the security of the camp; and after the horses had once or twice disturbed them, they lighted fresh fires among the underwood on all sides.

In the morning we were the first stirring; and when we came out of our tent, we found all the Yakoutes sleeping. They were very snugly rolled up in their accustomed wrappings, and the fresh flames of the fires were burning around them. As soon as we had aroused them, our first business was to descend the bank of the river near which we had pitched our tent, in order to discover how much the water had risen or fallen. But we no sooner reached the beach, than our attention was attracted by marks upon the muddy ground, by

which we found that a bear of no mean stature had been here promenading while we were asleep; and that by our unpardonable indifference to our horses' plaints, which were no doubt on account of the too near approach of this very animal, we had lost the best chance that could have occurred of a satisfactory shot.

When we came to examine the height of the water, we found it to be about six inches less than it had been when we arrived; and as the current must have proportionably diminished in rapidity, we now determined to attempt the passage. It was the strength of the current, indeed, rather than the depth of the water, that was at all times to be regarded. Thus, after making our preparations at perfect leisure, we traced the shore of the principal of the channels somewhat higher up than the spot at which the Yakoutes that we had met upon the previous evening, had crossed; and when we thought we had found a convenient place, we plunged into the midst of the current, and soon gained the opposite shore, without experiencing any other inconvenience than such as we were too well accustomed to to regard.

After passing this river, we found the plain at every verst less and less fertile. Of flowers there were now none; and of shrubs, save the stunted scrubby spruces, we had very soon scarcely the merest bush to vary the monotonous prospect; and for the torrents that had so much embarrassed us for so large a portion of our journey we had now nothing but sluggish streams, slowly wending their way through a morass in which there were occasional ponds, that were the resort of the curlew, the plover, and the snipe, which were every where in great abundance.

At length, upon the seventh day of July, after a journey of twenty-four days, of which the chief incidents have been recorded, and after a last trot across a barren

heath of a few versts in extent, we reached the banks of the Ochota for a third time, now within three or four versts of its mouth, and immediately opposite the good town of Ochotsk, that had been so long in our thoughts by day, if not by night also, as the happy place of our repose.

The breadth of the river is here about two versts and a half. From where we now stood, we had a peep at the sea through a narrow break in the sand hills which form the coast, and through which the waters of the river find a passage to the sea. The town appeared to consist merely of a small collection of black huts; but this dull picture of our so long wished for place of repose was a little relieved by the view of a brig lying near the mouth of the river.

There was no canoe upon the banks of the Ochota where we arrived; but the firing of guns and the lighting of fires soon brought us aid; and we now took leave of the last of the noble race of animals that had served us so faithfully, and of the last of our additional guides, who returned with his beasts freed from their burdens; and before the close of the day we were snugly housed in a Yakoute hut at Ochotsk.

I shall here further add only this remark, that the obstructions and difficulties which we met with upon this journey were greater than those which I had encountered upon any previous occasion; and that this was the first journey I ever made, where the accounts given by those to whom the road ought to have been known, of the difficulties and dangers to be encountered, have not proved to have been greatly exaggerated.

We were now upon the coasts of the Ochotsk Sea in the Pacific Ocean; and our distances by the measurement of the Russian government were from Yakoutsk, 1045 versts; from Irkoutsk, 3774 versts; and from Moscow, 8883 versts, or about 6650 miles.

The following words of the Yakoute language are taken from a vocabulary we made at Yakoutsk, and which we used in all our communications with our guides and the natives during our journey across this part of the country.

Yes	Sittee.
No	Socht.
Well	Outchigey.
Bad	Thoosahane.

Numbers.

1	Bare.
2	Akee.
3	Oose.
4	Terte.
5	Baiss.
6	Alta.
7	Sett.
8	Agaouss.
9	Togouss.
10	Owne.
11	Onordoubis.
12	Okorduchi.
20	Surbia.

Bread	Astobitt.
Water	On.
Beef	Augauss.
Horse	Att.
Road	Coll.
The good Spirit	Targarra.
The evil Spirit	Arbassi.
Man	Kissi.
Woman	Jaiktorr.
Bear	Assay.
Wolf	Barray.
Forest	Tay.
Tree	Marss.
River	Acurruss.
Mountain	Hatch.
Lake	Kaille.
Rain	Samirr.
Sun	Kunc:
Moon	Eyi.
To eat	Assirr.
House	Dea.
Bow	Okolôsse.
Gun	Ouraressar.
How much	Tasanug.
Nothing	Togtossoh.
Much	Elbiah.
Little	Otchaugong.
Grand	Oulahan.
Marsh	Oukarr.
Duck	Sassêke.
Stone	Tarse.
Goose	Harse.
Snow	Harr.
Ice	Bousse.
Enough	Tucksee.
Quick	Tourganik
Slowly	Bitakik.
Always	Millgi.
Often	Soubou.
Hat	Itti.
Cold	Timpi.
Dry	Kourranach.
Wet	Sikhiah.
Now	Sibilijik.
Late	Houtt.
Early	Aerday.
Again	Horroom.
Not yet	Akike.
White	Ourraunn.
Black	Harra.
Red	Kalille.
Gold	Partchi.

CHAP. XXV.

OCHOTSK.

Position of Ochotsk.—A naval Port.—Population.—Aspect of the Town.—Buildings.—Importance of Ochotsk.—Commerce.—Unhealthiness.—Means of Subsistence of the Inhabitants.—Character of the Climate.—Visit to the Commandant.—Society at the Government-house.—Preliminaries to a Marriage.—Eve of the Marriage.—Gaieties.—A Novelty.—Distinguishing the Age of Womanhood.—Usages of different Nations.—Remarkable Ceremony.—Various Symbols.—Benediction.—Admonition.—Preparation for the Church Ceremonies.—Exchange of Rings.—Whimsical Incident.—Russian Manner of regarding it.—*Fête* of the Commandant's Wife.—Sailors' Present.—First Appearance of a Cadet in Uniform.

THE town of Ochotsk lies in latitude 59° 15′ N. and longitude 143° 10′ E., and is situated a little eastward of the point at which the coast deviates from the north-east and south-west direction in which it stretches for several degrees further southwards, and now lies nearly due east and west, by which the country is laid open to the full effects of the south winds. It is a naval port, and has both an arsenal and shipyard, and a naval school. Its population consists of the officials, comprising the commandant, who is always a captain in the navy, and usually of the first grade, five or six other officers, and about 300 seamen, with several officers in the civil service of the government, and a few merchants. The little town stands at about a verst from the entrance of the harbour, upon the inner side of a long peninsula or neck of land, formed entirely of shingles, on one side of which is the sea, and on the other the River Ochota. Its buildings consist of about 150 log-

houses and huts, a government-house, a barrack, a church, and a hospital, besides those of the arsenal and shipyard, which are placed a little below the rest of the town.

Nothing can be more desolate and wretched than the aspect of this remote town and the country that surrounds it; though to our eyes, after our arduous journey, its meanest hut was most grateful and refreshing. Upon the occasion of our first walk among its buildings, we observed that they were not placed without some of that regard to order which distinguishes all the Russian towns and villages. There was even, notwithstanding its inconsiderable commerce, a double row of buildings containing a few shops, and though very badly supplied with merely a few articles for domestic uses, yet representing the *gostinnoi dvor*. The barrack was of two stories, but was fast falling to decay. The hospital was better. But the church is the most lone and wretched imaginable. It stands apart from the houses upon a little elevation of the shingles, and has a burial ground attached to it, the rails of which were, however, fallen down for want of solid earth to support them. Moreover, we heard afterwards, that it was impossible to place the remains of the dead out of reach of the wolves, by which they were continually raked from the shingles amidst which they were laid.

The importance, as well as the support, of the town of Ochotsk, are derived from its character of a naval depôt, and from its being the channel of intercourse between Kamtschatka and the interior of the country. Formerly, it enjoyed also advantages arising from its being the port of the Russo-American Company, which has been removed to Ayan. Two vessels have been built in its shipyard; but neither of which is fit to navigate the seas of these high latitudes.

The great disadvantages under which the town labours, arise from the excess of cold experienced upon this coast in these latitudes, and from the sterile character of the country which borders the coast, but above all from its extreme unhealthiness. These drawbacks, indeed, to its progress are so great, that were it not for the salmon with which the Ochota abounds, the expense of the maintenance of the town would be far greater than any benefits which it returns.

The unhealthiness of Ochotsk is more the effect of the position of the town with respect to the sea and the surrounding country, than of its latitude and longitude. Placed between the ocean, and lands which in summer are heated by so many hours of sunshine, it is exposed during the best months of the year to almost perpetual cold and damp winds from the sea; while in the spring it is subjected to the effects of an impure air, proceeding from animal matter in a state of decomposition, which covers the morass along the opposite shores of the river. Here, great quantities of salmon take shelter in the autumn, and are frozen, and lie embedded during the winter; and when the sun melts the ice in the spring, the swamps are found covered with the pestiferous animal matter. Thus the little settlement, as often as the wind is off shore, is exposed to all the effects of the malaria; and fevers and diarrhœa now prevail. The causes, indeed, of the pestilence are not of long continuance; for as the rivers begin to swell, by the melting of the snow at their sources, the morasses which border them are cleared of the intolerable nuisance. But scarcely, however, does this take place, before the town is subjected to the winds, almost as destructive to health as the pestilential atmosphere from which it has been so lately relieved.

It is said by the inhabitants, that Ochotsk, so unblessed by nature, wants, in effect, three out of the

four elements which compose the material world and support life elsewhere. Their houses, they say, are built upon loose shingles, amidst which their dead sleep; and thus they must needs want the proper element that composes the earth. For their water, they say, that in summer they have to send ten or twelve miles up the current of the river, which flows in a brackish stream by their doors. And when the state of the ice in spring and autumn prevents their so doing, and the snow which they melt in winter is gone, they have to drink of a single impure spring, from which flows all the water they possess. And their air, the element denied to no living creatures that walk the earth, is at one season rendered insufferable by the causes above mentioned, and at another loaded with drift snow, and at a third a mere blast from the ocean, almost as inimical to life as the malaria with which it is loaded in the spring. Fire, they say, alone of the four elements comforts them.

This picture, which the people of Ochotsk draw of their own sad condition, is but little exaggerated. From sixty to sixty-five, out of about 300 sailors, were sick in the hospital the whole time of my stay here, and nearly the same proportion of the constant inhabitants of the town were suffering from complaints incident to the climate. The Russian government does much to repay the officers for the inconveniences to which they are exposed at this remote station; but they cannot do too much for men subjected to so many trials of patience in so bad a climate, for the interest and advantage of their country. Their term of service is usually five years, during which they receive double pay, with a certainty of promotion at the expiration of the term.

On the morning after our arrival at Ochotsk, I sent a letter, with which I had been furnished by the

Governor-general Mouravief, to the commandant, Captain Voulalarski of the imperial navy, and I soon afterwards called at the government-house. I found the commandant of this distant outpost of the empire in the chief apartment of his dwelling, which was a neat and humble building, very suitable to the character of the place of his command; and I met a polite and hearty reception. The gallant officer was very curious concerning the country between the seat of his government and the more populous districts in the interior of Siberia, none of which he had seen. His road to Ochotsk, as well as that of all the officers and *chinovnik* that were under his command, had been upon his own element, round the great continent which comprises the three old quarters of the globe; and it had been a very long one, on account of their ship, though she was built in England, being one of the worst sailers that ever floated upon the ocean, which had caused them, indeed, to be about eighteen months on the voyage.

When a few other ordinary matters had been disposed of, I commenced my inquiries concerning the projects I entertained of continuing my travels as far as the peninsula of Kamtschatka; and I now learned from the commandant, that the ship which it has been already mentioned, passes annually between Ochotsk and the great peninsula, was expected to arrive here in about a fortnight, and that she would sail again to return to Kamtschatka after a very few days' delay. The commandant also informed me that, in the meantime apartments would be provided for my residence in the officers' barracks, and that, on the ship's arrival, every accommodation would be afforded me for undertaking the voyage. Before I retired, the commandant requested that I would dine with him the same day, that he might have an opportunity of introducing me to his family, and also to the officers with whom he was about to domicile me.

Upon coming to the government-house at the appointed hour, I had the pleasure of meeting Gospojah Voulalarski, as well as several of the officers of the port. The lady was quite the wife of a sailor, full of kindness and affability; and she seemed almost as much at home here, as if she had been native born, and unacquainted with more favoured portions of the globe. Since their arrival, too, she had given birth to five fine children.

Among the gentlemen present, were Captain Poplonsky, an officer who had lately explored a part of the south coast of the Ochotsk Sea, before unknown to navigators, and very little known to geographers, who have almost entirely depended upon the reports of the natives in the interior of the Manchur country. There was also Gospodin Yakovenko, *ispravnik* or judge of the province, and Gospodin Malinari, naval architect and surveyor, and an officer of engineers from one of the German provinces of the empire.

The dinner was purely Russian, plentiful as far as the table was concerned when the climate is allowed for, without being deficient in the ceremonies which the inequality of ranks among the guests in regard to one another, and their relations to the host upon such occasions, naturally engender. There was, nevertheless, a touch of that warmth of feeling and friendship among all parties, which will appear whenever a few individuals of similar pursuits or breeding are separated from the rest of the social family to which they belong.

The day after this dinner at the governor's, I took up my quarters at the officer's barracks, where ample rooms were assigned to me, with a couple of sailors for domestics. I was rather fortunate in respect to the time of my arrival here, as far as regarded the spare amusements which the members of the little society of the place are able to enjoy. Gospodin Malinari, above

mentioned, had had the good fortune to find a young lady of Russian descent upon the male side, attractive enough to determine him to fulfil the natural as well as the scriptural law, which commands us to increase and multiply, and the celebration of the marriage took place a few days after my arrival.

Among the Russians, the union of a young couple is at all times an affair of interest to a wider circle of the relations and friends of the parties, than the same event is with us, and of course this marriage was a cause of joy to the whole of the inhabitants of Ochotsk. The pure Russian blood is estimated in this part of Siberia in about the same degree that probably the Roman was estimated in our island when Agricola taught our progenitors, of one at least of the several races from which we trace our origin, that rational amusements and enjoyments contribute to cheerfulness, and that cheerfulness tends to produce that disposition of the mind which is most favourable to the advance of knowledge, and of all the refinements in which civilisation consists; and just in the same manner the Russians, as far as opportunities favour them, follow this wise as well as humane course for the improvement of the dull races they have subdued, and certainly with every prospect of arriving at the same results in Siberia that the Romans happily attained in Britain.

The day before the marriage, the papa of the young lady, who was the *otcoopstchik* of the department, gave a suitable entertainment, at which all the officers and *chinovnik* of the place were present; and I had the pleasure of being a partaker in the amusements of the evening. The good folks of Ochotsk enjoyed themselves upon this occasion much in the same manner that a party of mixed ages are wont to do among ourselves. Some danced, some conversed, and some did nothing. There was, nevertheless, at least one

novelty, but which was not necessarily connected with the immediate cause of the entertainment. This was the appearance of a younger sister of the bride, who had been dressed until this day in quite child's clothes, but now appeared in very marked woman's attire. I believe among all nations, ancient and modern, that have or have had any manners at all, it is and has been the custom to distinguish the period of life that we look so anxiously for during our under age by some ceremony, or by some change in our relations by law to the community to which we belong.

It was not permitted by Augustus that girls should marry before they had attained their twelfth year. Marriages at nine and ten on the side of the girl are very frequent in Eastern countries. Whether climate or race be the cause of the difference, certainly our species are much more precocious in some countries than in others; and perhaps in all countries the period fixed for manhood and womanhood, or, more properly speaking, the period at which the matrimonial alliance should be permitted, ought to be determined by laws framed in accordance with Nature's more hasty or more tardy performance of her good work. This period is not determined in law in Russia any more than in most other countries. But custom among the people in this part of the empire has established the age of seventeen for the full-grown period of the woman; and the moment is made manifest to the world by an immediate and very marked change of dress; and on this occasion the child of yesterday appeared set off to the best advantage in full woman's attire. But certainly, if this instance were a fair one, the conventional law has here by some years anticipated Nature; for the appearance of the young lady was that of a child that had put on her mother's gown, or that of a badly dressed doll. I made now this discovery, how-

ever, that I must, upon several previous occasions, have spoken to girls that were at any rate just bordering upon womanhood precisely as we address mere children. I am disposed to think, that a girl of twelve years of age in Egypt, and a girl of seventeen in this part of Siberia, are in general as nearly as possible equal, as well in regard to the material as to the immaterial portion of our two-fold nature; but I do not think that the duration of the full bloom of the one is longer than that of the other.

The first act of the ceremonies, as they were practised on this occasion, was one of ancient usage among the Russians, but which is not now practised in Russia Proper, or at least not in the great cities of the empire. When the celebration of the marriage is determined upon, a married couple, not being very young, are selected by agreement among the parties to perform the little offices which belong naturally to the parents on both sides; and in the present instance the gallant commandant and his lady played this important part, which was as novel to a stranger in the manner of its performance, as the appearance of the parties in this character was novel in the ceremonies. Upon the day selected for the celebration of the marriage, the substituted parents gave a grand entertainment, which commenced with a dinner, at which, in addition to the best viands of the country (which cannot indeed be much praised), were served the preserved meats and fruits and the choicest wines of Western Europe. But the young couple in whose honour all were assembled, were not yet present. Soon after we rose from the table, however, a herald formally proclaimed the approach of the bride and the bridegroom; upon which, the substituted parents took possession of the upper end of another room, which was to be that where the first portion of the ceremony of the marriage was to be performed.

The young couple now entered the dining-room, and the guests of the commandant stood back, to admit of their advance towards the inner room. The bride was prettily dressed in the chastest white, and the young officer was in military attire. Having passed through this room, they entered that appointed for the first part of the ceremony, followed by all the governor's guests, who remained at the lower end of the room, as spectators of the scene. The parties on whom all eyes were bent, now advanced towards the elder couple, who were standing to receive them, but with the slow and solemn step which a due respect to the representatives of the parents on both sides appeared to demand; and the little ceremony which followed was the more interesting, from its being a relic of the customs of the Russians of the more purely patriarchal age. The substituted parents bore in their hands typical signs at once of our relations with heaven and of our necessities upon earth. The father held with both hands before him the picture which was designed to furnish the holy corner of the sleeping-room of the happy couple, and the mother laid her left hand upon a loaf of bread, that had, on account of its immense size, been placed upon a small table by her side instead of in her hands. When the young couple stood in front of the elder, the bridegroom informed the substituted parents that he was about to accomplish the marriage, for which he had already obtained their permission, with the lady who was by his side; and that he now came, accompanied by his bride, to ask the blessing of their united parents before the celebration of the more important of the ceremonies of their final union. Upon this the substituted father made a sign to them in silence to kneel; and as soon as the young couple were on their knees, he made the sign of the cross with the picture over the head of the bridegroom, and then placed the little holy symbol to his

own breast. At the same time, the substituted mother, with her left hand still upon the bread, made the sign of the cross with the right hand over the head of the bride. As soon as these signs were made, the bridegroom bowed his head to the ground, and touched the floor three times with his forehead, while the bride remained kneeling. Then they both rose upon their feet; and after having kissed the little picture which was extended to them severally, they twice again repeated together the same genuflexions as before, and the bridegroom the same bowings to the ground, and the parents the same symbolic signs by which the blessing is conveyed.

The benediction being complete, the picture was presented by the substituted father to the bridegroom, and the bread, though not removed from the table, was presented by the substituted mother to the bride, the former as an appropriate memorial of the event, and the latter as symbolic of worldly prosperity. The presentation was accompanied also by a few words of solemn admonition, pronounced by the substituted parents separately, and which were translated to me as follows: — "So long," said the father, as he presented the picture, "as you both can look without shame upon this holy emblem, which will sanctify your chamber, your sleep will be tranquil, and your days will be happy." "Then," said the mother, "while you are virtuous, neither yourselves nor your children will want the fruits of the earth, typified in this loaf."

At this moment two stout sailors, that had been placed in some corner unseen, advanced and took up the enormous loaf, and bore it to the future home of the young couple, who now retired accompanied by their substituted parents, to proceed together to the house of the true parents of the bride.

Shortly after this, the rest of the commandant's

guests took the same road. When we entered the apartment in which all parties were assembled, we found the relatives of the bride and all who were most interested in the union, seated at the upper side of the room. We took our seats upon benches that had been placed around; and in a very few minutes after this, a ceremony of quite another kind to that last mentioned commenced, by way of preparation for the solemnities of the church, consisting in large doses of champagne accompanied with appropriate toasts.

From the father of the bride's house, late in the evening, we all set off together on foot for the church; for there is no description of carriages in use in summer at Ochotsk, except a few *talashani*, or small carriages for the dogs to draw water from the boats by which it is brought down the river, or from the brackish springs above mentioned, to the houses.

This part of the ceremony of the marriage was commenced by an exchange of rings between the future husband and wife, each party, according to the Russian custom, presenting a ring to the other. This ceremony, however, is performed in Russia Proper some days previous to that of the celebration of the marriage. On this occasion, the officiating pope carried these symbols of the sacred contract within the *ikonostass;* and after having there, unseen by the company, by some rite of the church, infused them with all necessary virtue, he returned them to the parties, who now made the exchange. The rest of the ceremony was the same as that of the marriages in the Russian and Greek Churches in Europe.

A whimsical incident occurred during the performance of the ceremonies, which a little relieved the weariness inseparable from an attendance at a Russian marriage, on account of the great length of the offices which the priests perform.

At a certain moment, when the happy couple stood with the crowns, which are used in the ceremonies, lightly pressing their heads, and with their eyes fixed upon the pope, who was reading, and when, doubtless, all others eyes were set with admiration or curiosity upon the bride and some maidens of mingled blood by her side, we were all startled by a smash within the sanctuary, that would have awakened a bear from his December slumber. Every eye was now turned towards the holy place, the whole vicinity of which was well hung with lamps and candles, and presented a kind of fairy show; but the cause of the alarm was concealed from our view. The officiating pope, as he stood and looked with apparent astonishment upon the screen which concealed the *ikonostass*, seemed to hesitate whether to throw down his book, and fly to the scene of mischief, or to preserve the dignity proper to the time, and continue his sacred duties. Nor did any of his several assistants move from the spot, on which they seemed to stand entranced. But while all eyes remained bent in the same direction, a little boy in naval uniform, with cocked hat and sword, presented himself from within at the door of the sanctuary, as if another bottle like that which imprisoned the *diable boiteux* had fallen, and given liberty to some spirit in the form of a general of Lilliput. It would have been impossible for the droll apparition to fail to set a party of stoics in a roar, and it was not therefore wonderful, that none of our party, from the pope to the sailors in the back-ground, were able to maintain their gravity on the occasion. The Lilliputian hero turned out to be the son of the commandant, at the time playing so different a part. Finding what was passing in the open church rather too wearisome for his temperament, he had entered the holy of holies, when all the attention of the company was occupied by the ceremonies

that were performing, and had accidentally committed some mischief that produced the alarm, but which, however, turned out to be of not much more importance in point of cost than the smash of the bottle that set at liberty the prying *diable boiteux*. And what might have been sacrilege among a less sensible people than the Russians, and deemed worthy of excommunication in the church whose priests separate themselves from the rest of the world, and remain unacquainted with the true feelings of humanity, was by the intelligent and good family pope of Ochotsk, looked upon just as a wise parent regards a piece of mischief practised by a spirited boy.

Besides the gaieties which were incident to the Ochotsk marriage, one or two *fête* days of some of the good folks of the place occurred during my stay here; and among these was that of the wife of the commandant. It was celebrated in the same manner that the Russians are wont every where to keep this sacred epoch of their particular history; yet two little incidents of the evening were adapted to attract the special notice of a stranger. While the dance, cards, and chess, were going merrily on, a gentle tap was heard at the door of the room in which the young folks were dancing; and presently in marched four seamen, staggering under the weight of a cake of enormous bulk, made of white flour, and which they brought to present to the lady on the part of the whole of the seamen of the port, as an acknowledgment of their gratitude for her interference in behalf of several of them, both at sea and on shore, by which they had obtained pardon for offences and escaped the floggings which the strict discipline of the service had seemed to demand.

The other incident will tend to show that the means of advancement, both in the Russian service and in the

grades of rank which are not so nicely defined by law, is not confined to those whose fortunes have placed them in the more populous and richer towns and districts of the empire. It was the presence of a cadet of the school above mentioned, who was a son of one of the ordinary seamen of the port, and was that day advanced to the rank of an officer in the imperial navy. He was a fine youth, and of course in uniform, and I was informed that several other seamen of the port had sons among the cadets, who were in the same way of advancement.

CHAP. XXVI.

OCHOTSK — *continued.*

A remarkable Disease. — Soirée. — Case of an afflicted Person. — Experiments. — Contradiction in the Symptoms. — Further Experiments. — Extraordinary Results. — Other Cases related. — Conjectures concerning the Origin of the Disease. — Arrival of the Annual Ship from Kamtschatka. — Amusements. — Salmon-fishing. — Shooting. — Tea Pavilion. — Nationalities. — Russian Officers not great Students of international Relations. — Their Impressions of the Character of our Enterprises. — Captain Poplonsky's Discoveries. — Winter Amusements. — Captain Rudakoff and his Ship. — Difficulty of leaving the Harbour. — Ill Adaptation of the Ship to the Port. — Unexpected Incident in our Favour. — Last Hour at the Commandant's. — Fellow-travellers. — Beach Adieus. — Embarkation. — Departure.

A REMARK has been made in a previous chapter, concerning a disease which is peculiar to this part of the country, and to which it was conjectured, at the same time, the apparent feature in the character of the Yakoutes, which is generally supposed by the Russians to be want of courage, might more justly be attributed. I was but a very few days at Ochotsk before I had the opportunity of witnessing some decided cases of this disease; and I shall report all that I was able to observe in two of these instances in particular, just as the facts present themselves to those who have no knowledge of the medical art.

The disease is called, in the language of the natives, *mereyachtchit;* but the Russians merely term it the Yakoute disease. The first of the afflicted persons whom I saw was a native lady, the wife of a merchant of this place. This was not a bad case; but, as the

manner of my introduction to the invalid forms a circumstance in the only account of the complaint which it is in my power to give, it will be first mentioned.

It was a thorough time of merry-making at Ochotsk, on account chiefly of the marriage above mentioned; and the *soirées* and suppers were nightly, and the strangers in the place were never forgotten. On my arriving one evening at the door of a house of rejoicing, in the company of one of the officers before mentioned, Captain Poplonsky, who had preceded us, and with whom I had previously had some conversation concerning the disease, came out to say that the lady above alluded to was among the guests within, and that he wished me to follow in his "wake," and close to him, in order that he might give me the opportunity, by suddenly introducing me to her, when I had not been previously seen, of witnessing some of the curious effects of the disease. The lady, he informed me, knew very well that there were strangers in the place, and, upon hearing that I was to be one of the guests of the evening, she had become very uneasy, and wished to retire, but had not been allowed so to do. I confess, when I heard this, and remembered what had been related to me concerning the disease, I feared that I should be a general disturber of the harmony of the evening; and I, therefore, begged I might be rather allowed to return to my quarters, contented with what I had heard, until a better opportunity might occur for observing the effects of the disease. But this was as peremptorily opposed as the request of the lady had been; and I therefore followed the captain, by whom I was closely covered. The lady, nevertheless, easily perceived the attempted deception; and, in considering the effects of the introduction that followed, it is necessary to remember this. When we stopped in

front of her, the captain bowed politely, and, after one or two words of course, suddenly started on one side, and, in a tolerably loud and rough manner, at the same instant, uttered some interjectional phrase equivalent to, "Behold!" In an instant, the lady was absolutely deprived of her senses; and, with a countenance which exhibited, as it appeared to me, at the same time, the passion of terror and the expression of laughter, she fixed her eyes on me for a few minutes, but neither said nor did anything. This produced, strange as it will appear, until all has been said of the disease that this case and the others to be mentioned suggest, a hearty laugh through the whole room. Upon this, the reason of the lady seemed gradually to return; and her countenance now expressed neither sorrow nor anger at what had passed, but rather perfect good-humour and simplicity, with smiles, almost like those of approbation. But it will appear doubly strange that this lady was subjected several times during the evening to the same treatment, which had always the same effect.

The next instance of the disease which I had occasion to witness, was a much more confirmed case. The afflicted person was a man of the mingled blood, and was a ship-carpenter in the service of the government. I was led by the commandant and the captain to the spot where the man happened to be working in company with several other men; and I was told by my conductors, on our way, that I was about to see the disease in its full vigour, and a case in which the means taken to exhibit it would not only deprive the sufferer of his reason, but reduce him to such a state of subjection as to allow of his being made to perform any act whatever that he was told to do by the party that terrified him, however unlawful or absurd it might be.

When we came to the place where the men were working, the commandant called to the sick man, who

was engaged in his ordinary labour among the rest, to approach him, just as if he had merely some instructions to give about the work in hand. The man came from among the rest, and stood in front of us, without seeming to take any notice of the presence of a stranger, which at least seemed to prove that the terror of foreigners that appeared to have had so strange an effect upon the afflicted lady, even before I came into the room, was not a symptom of the disorder. But while the commandant was conversing with this man, the captain suddenly started as he had done in the case of the lady, and bawled out again some interjectional phrase. At this, the man started also, and called out the same or similar words to those used by the captain, and then stood and stared like a madman arrested by his chains. Before, however, the afflicted man had been a minute in this condition, the captain roughly commanded him to beat the commandant, which the man now commenced doing immediately. But the commandant, being on his guard, had scarcely received a blow, and which was luckily not such as a John Bull might have given under similar circumstances, before he started also, and shouted at the same time, and, by a fresh command, set the affrighted man to beat the captain, who, by frightening him again in the same manner, left him stupified and standing inactive. He did not remain, however, in this condition for a longer space of time than about a minute, when, being no further tormented, his senses returned, and he smiled as good-naturedly as if he felt rather satisfaction than anger at the condescension of his officers.

Of the many other cases of this malady that I saw, the effects were always the same. But what most of all surprised me, was the good-nature with which all the invalids bore the barbarous treatment which they appeared to receive. I saw even urchins treating men of

middle age just as the officers had served the carpenter, and without receiving any other reproach than a very gentle check indeed, either from the witnesses of the apparent outrage or from the invalids themselves.

Many accounts, however, were related to me of the effects of the complaint seen under other circumstances, some of which were droll and some tragic. A woman afflicted was, while gathering wood, at the sight of a plume of feathers upon the cap of an officer just arrived at Ochotsk, seized with such a sudden frenzy as to be "frighted out of fear:" and in this mood, in which "the dove will peck the estridge," she attacked the officer so violently that his gallantry was rather sorely tried on the occasion.

Two officers who had been some time here, upon the dropping of a stone before them, fell to beating each other, and did not recover their senses until after they had been pinioned by the sailors at the command of a superior officer.

In most cases, when the afflicted person is in the act of doing any thing unlawful or ridiculous at the command of another, he will immediately desist if so commanded by the same person; but when the immediate cause of the derangement of the intellect is accidental, the temporary madman is not so manageable. Several children had been killed since the time of the arrival of the officers, that were now here, by their mothers letting them fall when they were suddenly alarmed.

Nothing seemed to be here known of the origin, or of the immediate causes, of this disease. It is said to have been prevalent among the natives at the time of the conquest of the country. The Russians, after a few years' residence, are as liable to it as the natives; and its effects upon both races are the same. This seems to indicate that it is at least an impartial endemic, origi-

nating most likely in the air and climate; which appears confirmed by the fact that all who are afflicted recover very shortly after leaving the country. Nevertheless, if the observations before made upon the strange contradictions in the Yakoute character be recalled, this may lead to a doubt whether that very submission of this people to their conquerors which has converted them all at once into a semi-civilised people, and the terror of civilised men of which an example has been produced, do not proceed from the prevalence of some sleeping portion of the disease in the very blood of the race. The name, indeed, which has been given to the disease by the Russians, by whom it is called, as before mentioned, the Yakoute disease, seems to indicate that this has at some time been the prevailing opinion among them. As for any such symptoms of the extraordinary malady as might lead the physician to a proper knowledge of it, I am only able to say that I found no one that pretended to know more than might be judged from similar effects to those which have been shown. I heard it, indeed, described while I was here, by some who had not been long in the country, as an affection of the nerves. But unless it were said, at the same time, what it is that affects the nerves, and in what manner these delicate links between the material and immaterial nature of which we appear to be composed are affected, this seems a very unsatisfactory explanation of the mystery.

Although the annual vessel from Kamtschatka had been expected in a very few days when we arrived upon the 6th of June at Ochotsk, she did not appear before the 26th of July, having had a passage of forty days, which was double that of the average of years; and there was now no prospect of her being able to sail again before three weeks or a month. After what has been said of the climate and the scanty population of

Ochotsk, it need hardly be said that, in spite of an occasional outbreak, such as that caused by the wedding, which was simultaneous with our arrival, there was a great want of means to relieve the tediousness of the time to all those who had been accustomed to European society. The officers, however, have several sources of amusement which are suited to the seasons of summer and winter, without including cards and chess, at which the Russians play at all hours, and generally well. In summer, salmon-fishing and shooting occupy their leisure hours; and in these pursuits which they now followed, I was able to join them. As to the fishing, however, the fish, indeed, were in far too great numbers to afford a lasting pleasure in catching them. I have already mentioned the quantity of salmon with which the rivers in this part of Siberia abound. Upon one occasion that I joined in the profitable sport, several of us together, with the use of a net, filled a canoe which carried about a hundred salmon of the ordinary size in three hours. During that time, however, we worked hard, and were very wet; and, moreover, on landing we learned, what was at least not calculated to stimulate further enterprise, that two of the servants of one of the officers of our party had filled two canoes in exactly the same time that we had taken to fill one. The same two men had, indeed, in four days caught 2000 fish; and it was not an uncommon thing for four men to catch 1000 in one single evening and night.

But the shooting at Ochotsk was quite another thing. Though the weather was continually bad, we were out almost daily upon the long banks of shingles and sand which reach for several versts upon both sides of the harbour, where the curlews and the plovers, though plentiful enough for good sport, were not so numerous or tame as to leave no motive for emulation. The

ground, too, being formed in ridges which afforded occasional shelter, was very favourable for this sport; and three or four of us together were ordinarily able during the afternoon to bag thirty or forty brace or more of large curlews, without counting the smaller species and the plovers.

Several times we mounted the stream of the Ochota, well prepared for the bears; but these animals are rather scarce within twenty versts of the coast, in consequence of the greater paucity of their food here, more especially of the choicer kinds of which it consists, such as berries and cedar nuts. We shot, however, some ducks upon these occasions. But as we found them generally in ponds unconnected with the river, and as we lacked proper dogs, those of the country being worthless for our purpose, this sport was not very attractive.

Captain Poplonsky had built a little pavilion about a mile from the town, above the beach, where the officers sometimes met in the afternoon to take their accustomed tea; and I was generally with them during my stay at Ochotsk. We had one day carried the commandant's atlas with us to suggest subjects of discourse, and our conversation fell upon the power and extent of dominion of the different sovereigns of Europe; and I was led to speak in the strain not uncommon among us at home, remarking that the sun never set on the British dominions. Upon this being said, my friends began to glory in the same manner in their pride of dominion; and one of the party said, "Neither does the sun ever set upon the Russian empire. When it is noon in our mid-territory, he surveys the Czar's dominions in one unbroken mass, save at the Straits of Behring, as far as his beams can reach, both in the east and the west, and, he is drying up the dew in the early morn at Sitka, our capital in America, at the

same time that he is darting his evening ray against the gilded domes of St. Petersburg."

Another time, when the officers were regarding the vast proportion of the earth over which the Czar held absolute sway, they fell into exultation very natural to men of the profession of arms, but which, out of delicacy to the foreigner, they expressed in their own tongue. It happened, however, that my acquaintance with this, was quite sufficient to enable me to comprehend what was said, with the maps before us and the previous turn of the discourse for a guide; and I was much amused with their nationality, when I found them in imagination stretch out the line of their fleets of the Baltic and the Black Sea, until, compassing Europe, they met in the Atlantic Ocean, masters of the coasts at least of all the civilised world. What could be more harmless, more natural, or more loyal? Not willing that they should be taken by surprise and too soon awakened from their pleasing dream of universal dominion, I did not for the present attempt to deaden their exultation by any suggestions that would have been as natural on my part as their thoughts were on theirs. I took an early opportunity, however, of expressing my doubts of the possibility of the Russians carrying out any great enterprise before a reform took place in their manner of life, more especially in the excesses in which they indulged in the use of wine, *vodka*, and tobacco, which were gradually undermining the constitutions of the people and subduing the mental and bodily energies of the nation.

I did not find the Russian officers whom I met in any part of the empire great students of the political or commercial relations of different countries to one another. My excellent friends here, thought that England only subsisted by such supplies from Russia as could not be procured elsewhere. They were, also,

under an impression, which is not uncommon in the great countries of Europe, as every one who has mingled much with the people on the Continent cannot have failed to observe, that all our national enterprises and international transactions were peculiarly selfish compared with the more cosmopolitan acts of the French.

Captain Poplonsky had been engaged for several summers in surveying the coast of Siberia, but more especially that portion which lies between the port of Ochotsk and the coast of China; and he had discovered a new port two degrees south of Ayan in which ships might anchor in perfect safety in six fathoms water. But as no salmon, the great support of Ochotsk, was to be obtained there, and as the coast was more open to the drift-ice in spring than that of Ochotsk, it was not believed that this discovery would lead, as it was at first expected, to the removal of the present port. The captain had also discovered the mouth of some large river, not laid down in any map, and which he believed to be an outlet of the waters of the Amour, that had not been before known. It seems extraordinary that, at this day, this part of the coast of Asia should be almost unknown, and especially when we remember that we have so many ships, commanded by able navigators, in the Pacific Ocean.

I called one morning with one of my friends to visit Gospodin Samiloski Temopha Evanoff, a merchant of this place, who was reported to have a watch that was a great curiosity. We found the merchant at home, and he exhibited a watch marked Bayley & Son, London, with the figures 1424 in three places. It was very large and had a steel face, and was not unlike that shown formerly in Westminster Abbey for Oliver Cromwell's watch. The figures, it was not doubted,

indicated the date, yet it may be that they marked the number of the watch.

While I was at Ochotsk, a deputation arrived from a large party of the Tungouse tribe, who were encamped in this vicinity, to pay their *yasac* to the government in skins, which they brought with them. The similarity in feature and form between these people and some of the Indians upon the eastern coast of North America, between the latitudes of 45 and 50 degrees, has been already noticed. This was particularly remarkable at this place. The same form of face, the same colour of skin, the same lank hair. We endeavoured, while they were here, to carry on some kind of intercourse with them by the aid of the Yakoutes of the town, who knew a little of their language; but nothing could have been more unsatisfactory. We contrived, however, to get a few of their words, which I think were put down with tolerable accuracy. They will be found at the end of the chapter.*

In winter, the sole out-door amusement of the Russians of Ochotsk is dog-sledging during the more temperate days that occur. The draught dogs of the coast should form a feature in any full account that might be given of the customs and manner of life of the inhabitants of this part of Siberia. They are, generally, a cross race between the savage animal of the interior of the country and the sledge-dog of Kamtschatka. But as enough has been said of the difference between the two races now naturalised in their several districts on the continent, and as an opportunity will occur to speak from experience both of the qualities and the use made of the parents of those of the coast in their native clime, all further remarks may be deferred until the narrative reaches the traveller's arrival in Kamtschatka.

The day after the ship arrived at Ochotsk, I had the

pleasure of meeting the captain, Domitti Rudakoff of the imperial navy, who commanded her, among the usual party of officers at dinner at the commandant's; and, after dinner, the whole party walked down to the port, at the distance of about two versts from the town, to inspect the forty days' storm-beaten "thing of life" and most welcome visitor to every one at Ochotsk. Such, indeed, had been the weather upon the coast during the greater part of the time that we were expecting the ship, that much anxiety had been felt by the friends of the officers and seamen on board, who were all of this place, save the captain, who belonged properly to the fleet of the Black Sea; for they knew well the dangers attending the navigation of this rude coast and stormy sea. The apprehensions entertained, indeed, during a violent tempest which had occurred immediately before the ship's arrival, and which had damaged the buildings on shore and destroyed a garden that had been formed with incredible labour by placing mould upon the pebble-stones upon which the town stands, had induced the commandant to send exploring parties along the coast on both sides, in the hope of relieving any part of the crew that might have survived the shipwreck which the vessel could not have escaped had she been near the coast at the commencement of the tempest.

The good ship, that was a sight of so much joy to myself in particular, was called the Irtysch, after the great river of that name in Siberia. She was, nevertheless, an English north-country built vessel, and had been once an humble collier, though now arrived at the proud rank of a man-of-war and store-ship in the imperial service, carrying eight guns, and officered and manned like vessels of the same force in the Black Sea and the Baltic, and sailing without a rival in these seas.

There was not much to see on board the Irtysch;

and her crew were on shore for a day's relaxation after the fatigues of the voyage. The captain entertained us after the mode of his country. The brave collier was as much transformed below as upon deck. She had two cabins, the larger of which was before the smaller, and was that of the captain, while the smaller was appropriated to the rest of the officers and passengers in the government service. In the captain's cabin there were two state rooms, into one of which I was at once introduced, as that which was to be appropriated to my use, and at the same time hospitably invited by the captain to mess with him during the voyage.

On the 15th of August the Irtysch was ready to cross the bar. Leaving and entering the harbour of Ochotsk are equally difficult, on account of the shallow water upon the bar, which does not at full sea at spring tides exceed two fathoms; and as our vessel drew more than this, when laden, it was necessary she should take in a portion of her cargo in the open roads. But besides that it requires full sea to cross the bar, as the channel is narrow, it is equally necessary that the ship should have a leading wind, and, moreover, that there should not be much sea running at the time of the passage. Thus, so many things being necessary at the very same time, the passage of the bar in vessels even drawing no more than nine or ten feet of water may be considered half the trouble of a long voyage. It is much to be regretted, by all who are concerned in this dangerous and difficult navigation, that a vessel peculiarly adapted for the port and the voyage, possessing above all things two qualifications in which the collier man-of-war was wanting—a light draught of water, and quick sailing capability, was not sent to perform the duty of these seas.

The new moon was upon the 16th; but, the wind being foul and the weather bad, there was every reason

to expect another fortnight's delay. It happened, however, upon the 21st, which was the last day that the depth of water might be sufficient, that a sudden gust of wind came down from the mountains in the interior, just at the moment of high water; and our watchful captain, being ready on board, took instant advantage of it, and cast off his holdings, and ran his ship over the bar just at the time that every one had made up his mind for another fortnight's delay at least, and while some other intended passengers by his ship, as well as myself, were comfortably seated at dinner at the commandant's. This was accomplished with no other accident than two or three thumps upon a bar of loose stones, to which sort of usage the transmuted collier was no doubt well accustomed.

The next day an attempt was to have been made to despatch two lighters to the ship, now lying at anchor in the roads, to complete her cargo, and the passengers were to have taken this opportunity of embarking: but as there was found to be a very heavy surf running upon the bar, the attempt was abandoned; and as a strong wind directly on shore sprang up the same afternoon, and there was no shelter in the road, and the holding ground was bad, the vessel was obliged to get under weigh, and haul off the coast, to return when the weather might permit. Fortunately, however, the wind was the next day moderate, and in the afternoon our good ship hove in sight again, and preparations were immediately made for our embarkation.

The following day, at noon, the hour of departure was at hand, and there was a little party of the friendly inhabitants of Ochotsk assembled at the commandant's; and, while we were engaged over sparkling champagne, in expressing our hopes of one day again meeting, and in exchanging our good wishes, and in speculating concerning the issue of the voyage, the amiable lady of the

commandant was occupied in preparing a box of luxuries for their foreign guest, consisting of wines, spirits, sweetmeats, and preserved soups, which was kindly presented to me on our departure.

At the hour appointed for our embarkation, the whole population of the town, from the commandant downwards, moved in a mass along the beach to the point at which the boats and lighters were lying. We were to have two ladies of the party, one of whom was a sister of our chief pilot officer, or sailing master, Chudinoff, whose duty in the service upon this coast embraced also that of the first lieutenant in our ships; the other was the wife of a pope some time since employed in missionary labours among the unconverted Kamtschadales: and we had also an officer of artillery who had lately arrived from Russia by land. All the officers, with the exception of the captain, and all the sailors, and also the two ladies, belonged to the place. Thus, if the proportion, as it was stated to me, be correct, of one-third of the voyages attempted between this and Kamtschatka since the passage has been known having ended in shipwreck, our departure was very naturally an affair of great general interest.

Besides the passengers, half the crew were now to embark on board the lighters and the boats appointed to tow them; and I must confess that such a scene of embracing and kissing I never knew hallow any beach before. And if benedictions, "with tears watering the ground," could appease the winds and waves, before the raging of which poor mortals must cede, we thought, as we embarked, our voyage ought to be fortunate. My own feelings were a mixture of triumph at the attainment of this step in my travels, which had been of doubtful accomplishment even to the moment the Irtysch passed the bar, and of regret at quitting the society of the hospitable and worthy men with whom

I had sojourned for six weeks on terms of the utmost confidence and friendship.

The two lighters were to be towed by four boats, in one of which we embarked; and casting from the beach, we now committed ourselves to the mercy of the current, over the effects of which oars have no control. We had much difficulty in crossing the bar, upon which the sea was still breaking. Finally, however, with the use of the oars after we gained the open sea, we reached our ship without damage. The goods were soon hoisted in, and the shoremen that had aided the transport of the wares left us, and our captain now looked only for the signal from the commandant on shore, to weigh and depart.

The next morning at break of day the signal was flying which gave us permission to get under weigh. But although we could perceive by the flags that there was a good breeze on shore, there was not wind enough where we were, to counteract a current which continually sets to the westward upon this coast, and by which vessels, when exposed to its influence, are drawn into a position from which they cannot extricate themselves, in case of a strong wind arising in the same direction, and which was the quarter from which it generally blew at this season.

In the evening a light breeze sprang up from the southward, which was dead on shore. Our captain now perceived the necessity of taking the earliest opportunity of creeping off the coast, and immediately weighed, and putting the ship's head to the eastward made all sail possible. The breeze continued during the night; but the land was still in sight in the morning. By noon, however, upon the day after we weighed, the wind had hauled two points; and when the sun set the same day, the Siberian mountains were fast sinking beneath the horizon, and we were now at length fairly on our voyage.

A FEW TUNGOUSE WORDS.

The good Spirit	Choupky.	Sea	Narm.
The evil Spirit	Arinka.	Rain	Orsn.
Man	Baia.	Dog	Niva.
Woman	Aschy.	Wigwam	Dschau.
Child	Koumakan.	Father	Aman.
Mountain	Ouriachtschaus.	Cloud	Oudan.
River	Achat.	Tree	Mo.
Wind	Chounga.	Snow	Smanda.
To-morrow	Admena.	Bow	Berkan.
Star	Agigate.	Canoe	Monis.
Sun	Nultine.	Knife	Tscherkaus.
Moon	Bacha.	Squirrel	Ouliky.
Water	Mou.	Fox	Oulitschaus.

CHAP. XXVII.

VOYAGE FROM OCHOTSK TO KAMTSCHATKA.

Character of our Recollections of a Voyage.—Auspicious Omens.—A Whale.—Superstition of the Sailors.—Observation of the Movements of the Whale.—The Traveller's Mode of regarding similar Things.—Real Signs disregarded.—Our Captain's Humanity.—Other Omens.—A Novelty among Sea-fowl.—A fanatic Servant.—Traveller's Discomfort.—Contrast of Tolerance and Intolerance.—Traveller's Mode of acting among a tolerant People.—Restoration of Comfort and Order in the Cabin.—A Whaler in Sight with large Fires lighted.—Keeping a *Fête*-day at Sea.—Our Captain's Reward for Services at the Caucasus.—Variable Weather and Winds.—Bad and unequal sailing of our Ship.—A tight Gale.

THE sea, commonly called that of Ochotsk, is a great gulf shut in from the North Pacific Ocean by a chain of large and small islands. It is bounded on the west by the continental coasts of Siberia and China, and on the north, the east, and the south, by the peninsula of Kamtschatka and by the Kurile Islands, belonging to the Russians and the Japanese. It is about 1200 or 1400 miles in extent from north to south, and between 700 and 800 from west to east; and our course was towards one of the passes between the Russian islands.

Those who have travelled much by sea are well acquainted with the manner in which the days blend and confound themselves with one another, and the indistinct recollection that the traveller retains, after his arrival in port, of what severally distinguished the greater part of them while he was at sea. When, indeed, there are ports and islands to touch at, where there may be even the smallest objects of interest to

observe, or where there may be enemies, civilised or barbarian, to encounter, both the tediousness of the voyage, and of any narrative of it that may be written, will be proportionably relieved. Or when a sailor writes, his knowledge of the noble art by which his ship is conducted over the trackless seas, gives him a power which it were in vain for any one not thoroughly conversant with both the theory and practice of navigation to attempt to excel. During the voyage on which we are now embarked, such few incidents as are thought worthy of notice will be set down in the order of time in which they occurred.

The first remark which appears in the note-book which I kept on board the Irtysch, apart from latitudes and longitudes, and other every-day matter, is precisely one of those which show how great our interest when at sea in trifles that afterwards even escape our memory, when they have not been written down at the time of their occurrence. On the morning after we left the land, we saw very near us one of those monsters of the deep in which the ocean abounds in every latitude —

——" that sea-beast
Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean stream."

He was observed ploughing up the sea, as he held his course majestically along, with a great portion of his enormous body above the surface of the water, and spouting up at intervals one or two great fountains of the liquid element upon which we floated. All attention was directed to the great sea-beast, which was by some pronounced to be a spermaceti, and by others a black whale; none of the first of which kind, nevertheless, I believe, have yet been found in this sea. This question, however, was not the cause of the interest that the great fish was to us at this moment. It was rather as an omen and messenger of good or evil, that we

regarded the monster of the deep; and in this light leviathan was an especial object of interest to us.

The ancient superstitions of sailors navigating the Atlantic, which doubtless originated in, or was nourished by, the hopes and fears natural to our position when out of sight of land, and the uncertainty concerning the length of our voyage, have been perhaps as completely subdued by the introduction of steam navigation, as all that kind of enjoyment commonly called romance, which belonged a few years ago to a journey from one end of our island to the other, has been destroyed by our railways. But since the Tritons and Nereides, and all the rest of the brave subjects of the supreme deity of the sea, have not been disturbed and frighted from this part of their sovereign's domain, we must not expect to find natural causes sought for to explain every event here, just as if Siberians and Kamtschadales had navigated our European rivers, or lived in our material world, or were accustomed in any way to the investigation of truth.

"Chief officer," said our captain, as he stepped upon a gun-carriage, and, while supporting himself by a stay, he regarded the movements of the monster, though he was probably rather a conformist to, than a believer in, the superstitions of the seamen, "go aloft and report in what direction the whale is swimming."

"*Sloutchez*" (directly), was the reply.

"And, second officer," continued the captain, "look at the compass, as the officer aloft points out the course which the whale is taking."

"*Sloutchez,*" replied the second officer.

And in a moment the chief officer was at the mast-head, and the second officer was over the "binnacle" with his eyes fixed aloft.

"But first, what manner of fish does it now appear to be?" demanded the captain of the officer aloft.

"Most certainly a spermaceti," replied the officer.

"And how does he head?" then said the captain.

"In this direction," replied the officer stretching out his hand.

"Which is," said the second officer, as the captain turned his eyes towards him, "exactly west-south-west."

"Nothing could be better," then said the captain. "Has he two spouts or one?"

"But one," was the reply.

"Enough: check the yards there, men," the captain now called aloud. "Officer of the watch, keep the ship a point free, and let her go through the water. Quartermaster, nothing to windward during the watch."

"It is impossible that any thing could be more favourable," now said our worthy commander, as he paced the deck with an air of satisfaction which his features had not previously worn. "The wind will soon be west-south-west, and we shall have a favourable voyage."

As to myself, I make a point on these occasions of not discrediting any thing that it is agreeable to believe, and of not troubling myself about the reasons or proofs that things are what they seem to be, so long as the omens are deemed favourable. But I nevertheless claim the privilege at all times of doubting, whenever the signs appear to point to things evil. And, therefore, I rejoiced with the rest at the good hope with which the leviathan had inspired us, of a favourable passage across this unfrequented sea.

We dodged on very well for some days, without seeing any thing save spouting whales, which were very plentiful, and happily generally sailing along in the right direction, and a few birds, among which were a duck and a hawk. The hawk, after hovering about us for an hour or two, towards evening alighted to rest himself, and roost upon one of our yard-arms; but nothing was prognosticated from his presence, though

certainly it indicated that the wind was off the land, and moreover, that it was very strong upon the coast that was nearest to us, which was that from which we came. But the duck, which came late in the evening for his night's rest also (for he was not of any of the species which float continually on the sea), settled upon the deck, and nothing whatever was divined from his visit, and no one knew the direction from which he came. We put him under cover for the night, and in the morning it was proposed to make a *stchee* of him. This was, however, forbidden by our captain, who said that the duck came, sent by whom we know not, to seek our hospitality, which we had given him, and that now we could not lawfully destroy him. So he was set loose, and he settled upon the water near us.

Some other fowl, however, of the many species in which this sea abounds, kept us daily conjecturing and speculating, though in a very indeterminate manner, upon our future prospects. There was in fact a great deal of difference of opinion about the indications and omens; and one saw good, and drew the most favourable conclusions, and was certain that he was right, when the birds flew high or low, or sat on the water in clusters or apart; while others were full of apprehension, when they observed the very same signs, which they were just as positive portended evil.

There was, however, a novelty to myself among the sea-fowl which we continually saw. There were two species of gulls keeping company, and living, as we were well able to perceive, in a strange relationship to each other. In some respects they might be said to very much resemble honest men and thieves among ourselves, though the plundered party of the winged tribe certainly bore their injuries more patiently than most honest men do at all times bear theirs; and this, notwithstanding that the kind of robbery was of

a more vexatious description than often falls to the lot of men to suffer. The injured party of these two winged species were gulls about the size of the larger sort of the common gulls upon our coast, and the other party were of another species much larger. The smaller sort were sitting upon the water in groups, in each of which there were from about thirty to a hundred birds, and the larger sort were hovering over these in the proportion of about one of their kind to twenty of the smaller sort. The smaller birds, as they sat in the water, were engaged in catching fishes, which appeared to be abundant and to be about the size of smelts, and the larger sort were occupied in darting at and snatching the fishes from the mouths of the smaller before there was time to swallow them. The Russians call the birds of the voracious species by the very appropriate term of *morskoy-naz-boinik* (sea-robbers or pirates). Both the species were abundant; and they afforded us some amusement in watching the dexterous thefts of the robber birds, and the apparent indifference of the dupes, as long as we had fine weather, during our passage of this sea.

Early during the voyage, a little matter occurred which regarded the comfort of the three tenants of the captain's cabin, the commander himself, and his servant and his guest, which I cannot forbear mentioning. The religious, and, at the same time, tolerant spirit generally prevalent among the Russians has been sufficiently dwelt upon. The captain's servant, Antonio, though remarkable for the best qualities that any man of any country, in his capacity, might possess, was nevertheless among the less enlightened of his race, and was an exception to the general prevalence of religious tolerance, at least among the Russians of the orthodox church, of which he was a member, and not less a stranger to the light, thoughtless, and gay

temperament which is among the more remarkable characteristics of the humbler grades generally of the Russian people. He was, however, a genius, and very skilful in several little handiworks; and, being much valued for his strict honesty and faithfulness, he was upon more familiar terms with his master than is usually the case with Russian servants. But he had two inveterate prejudices, or passions, from which the captain had not been able to wean him. He was a great hater of the fair sex, not one of whom he would so much as look upon, and not the less so of all foreigners, not because they were not Russians, but because he did not believe that they were Christians.

On account of this latter prejudice, he had during the first few days of our voyage conceived so bad an opinion of myself, that he had not even entered my particular cabin to perform such little necessary offices as are among the duties of a domestic; but with this negligence the captain had not been made acquainted. On the first Saturday evening, however, of our voyage, while I was upon deck, after we had taken tea, it happened that the captain, who remained below, in conversing more familiarly with his servant than he had before done since we sailed, gave the good man an opportunity, and the courage that he seemed to have before wanted, of asking a question which he said he had for several days wished to put concerning the foreign guest. He was still very cautious, however, in his approaches to the subject of his inquiry, and prefaced his question by saying, he trusted he would be pardoned, on account of the question being, as he believed, upon a subject that concerned every one in the ship as much as himself. And upon full leave being given to him to ask any question he pleased, he said that he wished to know whether his master really

was, as it appeared to him, entertaining, and eating and drinking daily with a heathen.

But it is necessary here to remark, that generally among the Russians of this class, not one of the numerous sects, bearing a common name, into which the religion of civilised man has been divided, save those into which the Russians themselves are divided, has been so much as heard of; and the omission of the outward signs of the Christian faith, which are in universal use among the different sects in Russia, ranks the nonconformist to these usages in the eyes of the less enlightened of the people, with the Tartars, the Buddhists, and the worst pagans, none of whom they consider to be fit to sit at table with Christian men. Thus, my omission of the ceremony of crossing myself before and after eating, and bowing to the little picture which hung in our cabin and sanctified one of its corners, in the same manner that it is found to do every where, from the chambers of the palace to those of the humblest cottage, on shore, had so shocked Antonio's susceptible religious feelings, that, as he declared himself, he could not sleep tranquilly on board, until he had ascertained whether his master's guest was or was not what he seemed to him to be.

Our worthy commander, who, as I had many opportunities afterwards of observing, possessed eminently the two points in religion which I found so prevalent among the Russians — strong conviction of the truth of what is taught, and unlimited tolerance — made an attempt, in reply to the question put to him, to enlighten his servant, by giving him some general account of the true state of the Christian world, with a few particulars concerning the more remarkable sects that were not generally known in Russia, and the differences between the external symbols which they used. But

he remained, as he afterwards informed me, for the present uncertain whether what he had said had been either understood or wholly credited.

In the meantime, not a word of the conversation between the captain and his servant was for the present communicated to me. But it happened the very morning after it took place, while I remained quite ignorant of the relations in which I was thought by the pious domestic to stand to all the good Christians on board, that I very unconsciously established my claim to the rights belonging to all the members of the Christian family. To refuse to conform to the external signs especially of religion, whenever this course is productive of ill-will, or liable to be misinterpreted, provided the conscience is not violated in so doing, and especially where there does not seem to be any thing in the religion in question that is contrary to our ideas of morality, and where we do not thereby give any just cause for an accusation of hypocrisy, I confess has always appeared to me to be unreasonable; and I should, for my part, have no objection at any time to make a thousand crosses at a single meal, if it pleased any body to see them made, or if the neglect of making them hurt any one's feelings in the manner it did our Antonio's; but I should be sorry to say that I thought that the viands would nourish the body the better, or that the soul would receive the smallest benefit from them, since men's conduct towards one another, and not external symbols, the Author of Christianity certainly taught, is chiefly regarded by the Creator. Thus it happened, that when the captain, over our breakfast, informed me that he would to-day read prayers, to serve for mass, in the presence of the sailors, I told him that if it were agreeable to him I would attend. And if any one among a tolerant people were to do otherwise, it appears to me that he would disgrace any

Christian church or community whatsoever to which he might happen to belong.

Be this, however, as it may, after the hour of prayer to-day, at the expense of mingling with the officers and seamen while engaged in the act of worship, and listening for a short time to prayers read in the Sclavonic language, of which the reader himself knew but a very little, and myself not a syllable, my position was quite changed; for I soon found that I had thus easily established a Christian character, and gained the good will and good service at the same time of the honest man that attended in the cabin, and, moreover, secured my comfort for the rest of the voyage.

On the 29th of the month, after dark, we observed a great fire in the direction of the south, which our officers and crew knew very well proceeded from one of several whalers, belonging to merchants of the maritime nations, which had lately found their way into this sea. As they melt their blubber in enormous cauldrons upon deck, wherever they appear, they illuminate the ocean during the night for many miles around them.

The 30th was the *fête*-day of a relation of our captain, which we all united in keeping. Nothing is more characteristic of the Russians, than the manner in which they keep the *fête*-days of their relations among all classes, even from the prince of the land to his meanest subjects. Our officers were on this occasion equipped in their full-dress uniforms, in their newest gloss, and wore their side-arms, and the seamen were mustered, and the champagne sparkled upon the binnacle; and if there were no other advantage to be reaped from the display, it was at least calculated to beguile a portion of a tedious day. It happened that it was the cause, however, to myself of a little revelation that it was agreeable to receive. Our captain alone of

the officers came upon deck without his sword, and Antonio, seeming to perceive that this was not quite ship-shape, brought up his master's weapon, which being of a description to attract curiosity, caused an examination to take place, that led to the discovery of an inscription beneath the hilt, which upon inquiry I found signified that it had been presented to its possessor for his bravery in an affair on shore at the Caucasus, under General Ryeffoki.

From this time, until the 4th of September, we had variable weather and changeable winds. Thus in spite of the auspicious omens at our sailing, our progress was slow, and we were yet but little more than half our passage across the sea. Our transformed collier, too, was a bad sailer, and under the most favourable circumstances we had not yet got out of her above six and a half knots. But she was worse than an ordinary bad sailer; for she was unequal in her rate of sailing upon different tacks. It was the first instance of the kind I ever met, on board any ship of any nation, and I felt confident that some mischief must have been done to her keel. When, in fact, we got six knots out of her upon one tack, we could not get more than four-and-a-half upon the other, with the same breeze, and with the same canvass spread, and sailing under the same circumstances in relation to the running seas. There was no suspicion, however, on the part of the officers of there being any other reason for this than that kind of want of skill in her constructor, so common among the architects of Russia, which has left nine-tenths of the church-steeples of the empire absolutely lop-sided.

On the 4th of the month we experienced a tight gale, which, as it was from the eastward, obliged us to lie to under the close-reefed main-topsail. In this position, however, the Irtysch behaved admirably, and made some amends for her bad sailing. Although the

waves, as in all narrow seas, were short and quick, and knocked rudely enough against her weather bow, she sat, as seamen say, like a duck upon the water, and scarce a drop of the element upon which we floated came on board of her.

CHAP. XXVIII.

VOYAGE FROM OCHOTSK TO KAMTSCHATKA—*continued.*

Agreeable Break in our Voyage.—American Whaler.—Character of the Encounter.—Boarded by the Captain of the Whaler.—Particulars of our Intercourse.—Interchange of News.—Good Sense of Sailors generally.—The Captain of the Whaler's Idea of a French Republic.—News of the Ochotsk Sea.—Earthquake felt at Sea.—Make the Kurile Islands.—Agreeable Sensation in making the Land.—Magnificent Spectacle that these Islands present.—Volcanic Peaks and Cones.—Smoking Mountains.—Exhibition at Sun-rise.—A remarkable Phenomenon peculiar to this Sea.—Notice of the Kurile Isles.—Inhabitants.—Distinct Races.—An original People.—Mode of Life.—Trade with the Russo-American Company.—Jealousy of the Japanese.

On the 8th of the month we experienced a little relief to the every-day occurrences of the voyage, which we had not anticipated. At day-break in the morning, while we were scarcely lying our course, dead on a wind, with a light breeze from the southward, a sail appeared in sight to windward, bearing down upon us under a press of canvass. The telescopes were immediately in hand, and we soon perceived the American flag; and our captain had no doubt of her being one of the several whale-ships which had lately found their way into this sea. In less than two hours the ship hove-to within gun-shot of us, upon our weather quarter; and as we followed her example, she lowered her boat and boarded us, when she proved to be the whale-ship Marcia, Ellison master, of New Bedford.

I cannot refrain from being particular in the relation of this incident and break in our voyage, on

account of the interest excited by the contrast between the two parties encountering upon the waters of this little-frequented sea.

As the whaler's boat came under our lee quarter, the telescopes that had aided in scanning her as she approached were placed under the arms of those who had been using them, or upon their rests on the capstan, and all the officers, save the captain and such as were on duty, and all the passengers, now hung over the quarter-rail, to scan a little closer the visages of those they were about to see for the first time, hold a moment's intercourse with, and then see no more.

I do not know a more interesting moment, upon a long voyage especially, when we have seen no strange faces for some time, than that at which the officer of a ship we fall in with, jumps upon the deck upon which we stand, or that at which we mount on board another ship, as it has often been my lot to do, and exchange mutual inquiries about the accidents of our voyages, and concerning the last news of importance at the ports from which we severally came. In the whaler's boat sat six rowers and a steersman, all in their red shirt sleeves, and as they put in their oars, and the boat reached the waist of the ship, the steersman sprang up to the gangway, and was, in spite of his red sleeves, easily recognised as the commander of the ship. In the meantime, though he ought not to have been surprised, as he must have seen our guns peeping out at the port-holes as he came alongside, he appeared for a moment taken "aback" at the ceremony of his reception by the officer of the watch, with the gay uniforms which he saw about the deck. After an instant's pause, however, he was conducted by the officer who received him to the quarter-deck, where he was introduced to our captain.

Of such a character had so far been the ceremony on one side, and the impossibility of imitating it success-

fully in shirt sleeves upon the other, that it seemed as if the intercourse of the two ships was going to be very unsatisfactory. But it was gratifying to see how easily good sense set aside etiquette, when its observance would have stood in the way of the agreeable intercourse that the time promised. The gallant captain of the man-of-war, decorated with his ensigns of rank and authority, now offered his hand to the master of the whaler in his red shirt sleeves; and the two appropriately dressed monarchs of all "they *daily* surveyed," shook hands as heartily together, with the eyes of the whole ship upon the scene, as if they had been two ancient friends.

The invariable first questions which pass upon the occasion of a parley with the speaking-trumpet between the commanders of two ships at sea when a mighty wave still rolls between them, are well known. "Whence came ye?" "How long have you been out?" "Where are you bound to?" and, "What is your longitude?" The same subjects, somewhat amplified, usually form also the first portion of a closer intercourse of the two parties on board one of the vessels. The commander of the whaler had not expected to find any one on board the Russian ship to act as interpreter; and he had boarded us chiefly for the purpose of making a little break in the sameness of his own constant avocation; and, moreover, as he had no doubt that we were lately from the land, to inquire at the same time our longitude, the badness of the weather having prevented his taking any observations of any of the heavenly bodies for several days. Before, therefore, any difficulty seemed to arise to render an interpreter useful, he demanded our longitude, and was easily understood. And as the day's reckoning had just been completed by the chief officer, who was present, the question was answered by presenting the

slate which had been lying on the companion with the figures that resulted from the work. Upon this, the master of the whaler took his pencil out of his waistcoat pocket, and wrote down our longitude upon the palm of his left hand. Certainly, the Chaldean shepherds could not have had a simpler means of registering their astronomical observations. Then taking the slate in his hand, he put down for our information the longitude by his account, which differed but little from ours, and which, as he had two chronometers and we had none, was most likely, notwithstanding the little use he had been lately able to make of them, nearer the truth than ours.

But now that the intercourse could not by the same simple means proceed further, the time was arrived for the intervention of a third party; and upon my addressing our welcome visitor in our common mother tongue, the hardy sailor took the opportunity before every thing else, to apologise as handsomely as possible for boarding a man-of-war in his red shirt sleeves. Then followed some such questions as those above mentioned; and as the weather was fine, and the two ships were now sailing in the same direction, our captain invited the master of the whaler below, where over a glass of good wine, we entered upon other subjects which afforded us a most agreeable hour's conversation.

The last dates from the countries that play the leading parts, whether in comedy or tragedy, upon the wide stage of the world, usually upon these occasions precede our more particular inquiries concerning the most important news. And when it is found which of the parties encountering has the latest accounts, the next inquiries proceed from the other side. What was the great international play in course of representation when the last accounts came away? Who were the

actors? Who the "robustious and periwig-pated" princes, that were tearing the passions of the nations to tatters? And which of the monarchs were tranquilly beholding the last scene of the mighty drama, always enacting in farce, tragedy or dumb show, with never-ceasing plot and counterplot, on the great theatre of the world?

As the whaler had been two years out, it was our fortune upon this occasion to have the latest news, and moreover, as it happened, to be the brief chroniclers of the first scene of the serious play then opening upon the eventful year of 1848. I had quitted Irkoutsk just after the intelligence of the flight of Louis Philippe had reached that capital; but all that we could say for certain was, that France was once more a republic.

If sailors are not the most ingenious and subtle reasoners in the world, they are not the least remarkable as a class of men for their general good sense and correct judgment. If they are not profound politicians and political economists, they are freer than any other body of men from those motives to a narrow judgment, which necessarily influence those who sit continually too near the scene upon which men's eyes are chiefly bent, to leave them at liberty to generalise their thoughts. Perhaps the very space which is continually before their eyes may aid in resisting the tendency of the mind to circumscribe its thoughts within the sphere of its own particular experience. Be these things, however, as they may, I was curious to note how the sailor citizen of a republic, turned for a moment from his whale-fishing, would receive our European news, and what observations he would favour us with.

The sailor reflected but for an instant, and then exclaimed, "France a republic! The French people are not of a character to maintain such a government. Even in America, we, who have known no other, and

who are the offspring of a people who are free as ourselves, find it as much as we can do to weather the storms of the presidential election. How, then, can a nation of the most excitable people in the world, be expected to ride out the quick succession of political tempests which must necessarily follow the establishment of such a government?

In return for the pithy intelligence which excited these observations, we received the news of the sea upon which we were floating. The captain of the whaler told us that he believed that about forty vessels, for the same objects as himself, had found their way this year for the first time into this sea, and that they were chiefly French and American; but that, owing to the bad weather that had prevailed during the greater part of this season, notwithstanding the whales were plentiful, he believed there had not been the average number of them, of one year with another in the northern fishery, yet taken. He informed us, that of thirteen whales which he had killed, he had lost three by the bad weather before he could secure the oily portion of them; and that when the last gale came on, which was the same that we had experienced, he had thirty barrels of oil on his deck, which he saved with great difficulty. He still wanted, he said, fifteen fish to fill his vessel with oil, but which number he hoped to make up in this sea in the course of the next summer. But he was somewhat surprised when he heard from our captain that the Russian government was contemplating, or had determined upon sending some men-of-war a little more formidable in effect than the Irtysch, to take absolute possession of the sea, and prevent the vessels of all other nations from entering and fishing without a pass from the Russian government. This, however, seems a measure that it is hardly likely can be contemplated, seeing that a large porti o

of the coasts of this sea are Japanese and Chinese, and that the sea may be entered without even approaching the Russian territory.

The master of the whaler also informed us, that one of a number of ships from the same port as himself, had been wrecked upon the coast of Japan with 3000 barrels of oil on board, and that he himself had narrowly escaped driving on shore during the same gale. He gave us an account likewise of the shock of an earthquake, which he had felt in the middle of this sea upon the 8th of June, and which was so severe that he thought for a moment that his ship had struck upon a rock. All seamen, indeed, with whom I have conversed, who have witnessed the effects of this phenomenon at sea, give the same account of their sensations. I was on board a ship in the port of Valparaiso on the night of the 4th and 5th of June, 1849, when a shock was felt; but I was asleep, and quite unconscious of it. Others, however, were awakened; and some thought that the movement they felt was caused by the grating of the hawser from our ship across the hawser from another; and others, that we had drifted foul of another ship, and were thumping against her by the motion of the water.

After an hour's agreeable intercourse, the commander of the whaler left us, and the two ships soon parted company. At sunset, we were not by our reckoning above 110 miles from the Kurile Isles, which form the south-eastern boundary of the Ochotsk Sea; and as we were lying our course with a spanking breeze, we had every reasonable hope of seeing some of the islands (many of which are visible at the distance of ninety miles), or of even being very near them at day-break the following morning.

The breeze continued, and we were not disappointed. As the next day broke, our captain came to my cabin,

to give me notice that the land was in sight at no great distance from us, and that the view of what was already visible, afforded such a magnificent spectacle, that he was desirous I should not lose the opportunity of seeing it before it might be obscured by the mists which hang almost perpetually about these islands, and upon the eastern coasts of this sea.

Those who have made voyages in high latitudes especially, will not readily forget the agreeable sensations which they cannot fail to have experienced, when after looking for many days only upon the sky and the water, divided by the unbroken line of the horizon, with nothing but the clouds to vary the one, and a change in the motion of the sea the other, they again behold the firm land. Probably, indeed, there are few travellers by sea who would exchange the feelings that have possessed them at this moment, with those they have experienced upon entering port, if allowance be made for the pleasure of meeting our friends, when we chance to have any at the place at which we arrive.

It was hardly full day, when I came upon deck; but there was light enough to see plainly the cone of a mighty volcanic mountain, forming the island of Ahlehead, which appeared towering above a stratum of vapours that divided the mountain about a third of its full height from its summit. The breeze that had brought us within view of the land during the night, had now died away; and there was nothing to interrupt our calm contemplation of the scene which the increase of light was rapidly presenting to us. Our distance from the island by cross-bearings taken from its points at the base, was found to be twenty-eight miles, though it did not appear to be above eight or ten. The floating mists which divided the mountain were drawn out in a long and straight line, without any variation of colour; while from the top of the cone above them,

ascended a still subtler element, proceeding from the burning substances within the crater of the volcano, and which at the limits of its altitude formed a curling cloud of deeper hue, which by the constant succession of the floating particles that were taking the place of those that were lost to the sight, appeared as motionless as the vapours below. But our view did not long remain confined to the objects that were at first visible. As the light increased, the larger island of Pero Muchan, which is about forty miles in length, gradually came into view in the same direction, about fifteen miles more distant from our place of observation, and presented a series of volcanic mountains with cones and peaks of various forms and altitudes. From one of these alone, which towered high above the constant stratum of still vapours that divided all the cones and rude summits from the bases upon which they rested, ascended a volume of dense smoke, which the winds dispersed at a great height above the mouth of the crater from which it issued.

As we stood contemplating this magnificent display of some of the mighty natural objects which so vary the scenery that adorns our fair planet, the far greater object of wonder, and the greatest that we are permitted to look upon, was on the point of coming into view, and the eastern sky already exhibited the livelier colours and deeper shades which in all lands proclaim equally the return of day. But now as the rays of the bright orb fell upon the peaks and cones of the mountains, all that caught the direct beam became streaked and shaded with lines of varied colours, which the snow in the ravines and the deeper shades of the bare earth which divided them severally reflected. But before the great source of all we enjoy became visible from our deck, the floating vapours also received his direct rays, and the magnificent spectacle which we now beheld, was extended to the limits of the vision on both sides.

I shall here mention, upon the authority of our captain and two of his officers, a remarkable phenomenon which is frequently observed in these seas, and which is called by the natives of the coasts *spolocka*. Its most common appearance was described to me by these officers with the aid of an old sailor who had navigated this sea, and lived upon its coasts for fifty years, and to whom it was consequently much more familiar. A bright speck of white light or luminous vapour first appears upon the horizon in the north, and presently seems to rise in a column of about 6 or 7 degrees in breadth; which continues to ascend, and to increase in length until the upper end reaches within a few degrees of the zenith, at which time the lower portion appears to separate itself from the horizon. It continues however, to advance, in falling towards the south, until what was the upper end as it rose, becomes the lower as it approaches the southern horizon, beneath the watery line of which it now gradually sinks until it entirely disappears. The whole time of the passage of this remarkable light across the hemisphere, from the time of its appearance until it is lost sight of in the south, does not exceed three minutes.

I have seen many different appearances of the aurora borealis in the higher latitudes of both continents as well as at sea, but I never saw any thing that resembled this light. Yet I am disposed to believe that it is but a variation of that unaccountable phenomenon, arising from causes yet unknown. Those, however, who gave me this account, and who were of course well acquainted with the varied appearances of the aurora borealis, were not of this opinion.

While we are considering what appears peculiar to this sea, I must mention, that I remarked during this voyage, that that sparkling light seen at night in the water when agitated in every sea, and formerly supposed

to be phosphoric, prevailed to a much greater degree in this than in any sea I had before navigated. If it really proceed, as I believe it is now stated, from any form of animated nature or of organised being, at what a profound depth must the secrets of Nature yet lie hid from our observation!

The remarkable chain of islands of which we have now several under our view, whether we regard their position, or the natural wonders they exhibit, belong in part to the Russians and in part to the Japanese, two people probably, that of all the varieties of the human species the least resemble each other, yet they are not inhabited either by the one or the other. Some of them are inhabited by men, nevertheless, of two races almost as distinct from each other as the two people by whom they are governed, or more properly speaking, to whose dominion they have been severally subjected, as their inhabitants are described as scarcely living in a state of society. The Russian islands are six in number, without taking those into account which are little more than the cones and craters of volcanos, or those, of which there are several, that are formed of mere rude and barren rocks. They are all, indeed, of volcanic formation. The most northern of them is that of Sumshie, which lies between the larger island of Pero Muchan, in sight of which we are now sailing, and the southern point of the grand peninsula of Kamtschatka. The most southern is the island of Urup, which forms one side of one of the passages, of which there are many, connecting the Ochotsk Sea with the ocean. The south point of this island is in the latitude of 45° 35′.

The Japanese portion of this chain of islands, without taking account of the large island of Jesso or Matsmai, which forms the south-eastern barrier of the Ochotsk

Sea, consists of two long islands called Iturup and Kumoschir or Ischikstan.

The Russian islands only are at this time inhabited by portions of the two distinct races. The race which inhabits the most northern are called by the Kamtschadales (who themselves have been long subjected to regular government, and are comparatively a civilised people), simply Kurilians, after the general name given to the islands. They resemble the inhabitants of the southern districts of Kamtschatka both in feature and in their language, and they have doubtless a common origin with that people. But the inhabitants of the more southern of the Russian islands, are called by the Kamtschadales Kurilian Mahnali. These seem to be quite an original people. A Russian that I afterwards saw, who had been at a station that has been established by the Russo-American Company upon the north side of the island Pero Muchan for the furtherance of their commerce in furs, and who was well acquainted with them, informed me, that they did not certainly resemble the Chinese, whom he had seen, in the slightest degree; and, as it is supposed that the Japanese are closely related to that people, probably none of the islanders are related to either the Japanese or the Chinese. The same gentleman informed me, also, that the last mentioned of these inhabitants are such a hairy race as to have obtained a name from the more northern inhabitants of the island, equivalent to that of "hairy men." Neither of these races of these islands have fixed abodes, and both live chiefly upon seals, sea-cows, or the walrus, and a species of the same genus called by the Russians by a term that would signify in English sea-beaver, and of which we saw several as we passed through the strait. They have both now, however, begun to trade with the company above named in the skins of these animals, from which intercourse they will

no doubt, in time, receive the same advantages that are enjoyed by the other races which have been incorporated with the subjects of the empire.

The Japanese islands were till very lately inhabited by the same race of men as those which occupy the more southern portion of the Russian islands. But their population has been withdrawn by the Japanese government, in order to separate them as far as possible from their brethren inhabiting the Russian islands, so as entirely to cut off all intercourse between them.

CHAP. XXIX.

VOYAGE FROM OCHOTSK TO KAMTSCHATKA—*continued.*

Baffling Winds.—First Sight of one of the Kurile Isles.—Driven off.—Approaches to the Strait between the Islands.—The Mariner's Sentinels.—Obscurity of the Passage.—Currents.—Captain's Birth-place.—Favourable Omen.—Great Islands visible.—Winds.—Make the Coast of Kamtschatka.—Scenery.—Approach the Land.—View of our Port.—Prudence of our Captain.—Hawl off.—Disappointment—Notice of the Remainder of the Voyage.—Second View of the Port.—Threatened with Destruction.—Alarm of Fire.—Cautious Proceeding of the Captain.—Plan to prevent the Breaking out of the Flames.—Admirable Order preserved.—Discussion concerning bearing up for some other Port.—Again approach the Land.—A Whaler. Enter the Passage to the Bay.—Arrival in Port.—Character of our Navigation.—Officers.—Seamen.

We had baffling winds and variable weather during the whole of the day on which we made the islands, settling in the evening in an east wind, with a densely loaded atmosphere. Our course had been directed during the day towards the strait which forms a passage from the Ochotsk Sea into the ocean, between the islands of Pero Muchan and Ownekotan, which is the third navigable channel south of the point of the peninsula of Kamtschatka, and the safest in the northern portion of this chain of islands, on account of its superior breadth; and before dark, we obtained a sight of the islet of Sherinska, which lies near the north entrance of the strait.

During the early part of the night it blew a gale from the east, and we were driven some leagues to the westward of the islands; but as the day approached

the wind veered to the northward; and as it now became more moderate, and the thick clouds and mists began to disperse, we made all sail towards the strait, through which it was our intention to pass. But as we approached the land again, we found the atmosphere as loaded as before with vapours and thick clouds; and nothing was visible around us, when we supposed ourselves at the very entrance of the strait. Suddenly, however, the high and rocky islet of Sherinska, which we had seen on the previous evening, appeared on one side of us at about thirteen miles' distance, and in a few minutes afterwards, another similar islet upon the opposite side, at the same distance, called Monkuruska. These two islets stand out on either side before the entrance of the strait, the very mid-channel of which we thus now found we were approaching with admirable exactness. But for two hours after this, we yet saw nothing of the coasts and mountains of the larger islands.

These two conspicuous islets are no more, indeed, than the mere cones of the craters of volcanos; and they are appropriately called by the Russians *Karaooli* (the Sentinels), because, in thick weather, by reason of their less attracting the clouds and fogs than the larger islands, they are seen in time to warn the navigator (as it happened, indeed, in our own case) of his near approach to the strait, where he might, without such notice, be subjected to the influence of dangerous currents before he was sufficiently certain of his position to direct his course through the passage. They were not, however, now sufficiently well seen to enable us to distinguish their volcanic character. But the officers on board informed me, that as they passed them by on their voyage to Ochotsk, the one that was on the south side of the entrance was disgorging a broad volume of dense smoke.

As soon as the two Sentinels were plainly enough seen for our purpose, our course was set with confidence; and as the wind now veered to the south-west and blew a gentle gale, we fairly entered the passage between the larger islands, which we were not yet able to perceive, under full sail, with as much security as if we had seen the land upon both sides of us.

As we advanced, the two Sentinels became again obscured from our sight. But we were assured of our position by the smoothness of the waters in which we were now sailing.

I do not remember any where on board ship being placed in a more curious position than that in which we now found ourselves. With a strong breeze and under crowded canvass, we were sailing with the utmost confidence between two rocky shores, through a channel about sixteen or eighteen miles in breadth, and without any fixed object visible in any direction around. And as the day advanced the sky became clear overhead, and we could see many miles astern, and towards the ocean almost to the horizon; while the land, with its peaks and mountains, was enveloped in dense clouds, which entirely concealed it from our view on either side, so that we appeared to be sailing between two vast walls of condensed vapours and dark clouds.

While we were gliding gently, yet rapidly, through the smooth water of the strait, Antonio made his appearance upon deck, loaded with bottles of champagne. These I supposed to be for the purpose of greeting worthily the sovereign of the ocean, into whose wider domain we were now launching, or such of his brave subjects as this portion of his watery empire might especially acknowledge; but it turned out to be an offering of our captain to the manes of his parents, in commemoration of his own birth, which took place in this very strait on board a ship of war, which his

father commanded at the happy epoch, about thirty years since.

While we were occupied in aiding the captain in honouring his parents and hallowing the place of his birth, a favourable omen, as if some of the Tritons and Nereides of the sea took the compliment to themselves, greeted us. One of the sea-castors or beavers before mentioned, with which the seas that wash these islands abound, popped his head above the water and stood erect, with at least as much as three feet of his body exposed to our view, as if he were a sea-god that was contemplating us approvingly, on account of our loyalty, as we passed by. There was at least not a man among us that did not augur from this visitation a speedy and happy termination of our already too-long-protracted voyage.

We were now going rapidly through the water; but at what rate we were passing the land we could not tell, owing to the uncertainty of the currents in the passages between these islands, which depend chiefly upon the winds, and they had been variable. But about two hours before sunset, the peaks and summits of the higher mountains upon the northern, and soon afterwards those upon the southern island, began to appear, though still confounded with the dark clouds which wholly obscured their solid masses.

After sun-set, the land became visible on both sides of the strait. And as we launched into the ocean, we distinguished very plainly the most eastern capes of the two islands, from which we shaped a course towards the south-east coast of the peninsula of Kamtschatka with a spanking south-west breeze, and in full hopes of reaching the Bay of Avasha, in which the Russian seat of government is established, in three or four days.

Upon the whole of the day after our entrance into the

Pacific Ocean, we were sailing parallel with the chain of islands, with a strong wind from the west-south-west; but, though the atmosphere was clear around us, the land was not visible, on account of the clouds and vapours that still hung about it.

The next day we obtained the first sight of the coast of Kamtschatka which presented an irregular line of rugged mountains, the higher of which at their summits were covered with snow. We appeared here to have got quite into the region of the whales. At one part of the day no less than five were blowing around us at the same time.

The fine weather, with a strong westerly wind, continued until the early part of the third day after we left the Ochotsk Sea, when we obtained a view of the mountains in the vicinity of the Bay of Avasha, to which we were bound. The scenery of this particular part of the coast is of the grandest description. A wide range of rude and elevated land presents itself to the spectator as far as the eye can reach, from the midst of which three enormous mountains, whose summits terminate in volcanic cones, rise above the rest, and add that finish to the wild magnificence of nature, which the domes and minarets when seen from the same element upon which we were floating, high towering above the irregular buildings of a great metropolis, add to the most remarkable of the works of men. I cannot forget the raptures with which we looked upon this display of the prodigality of nature in her sublimest works in the material world.

As we approached the land, a lower country in advance of these mountains seemed to rise gradually out of the water, and by and by presented a bold, high and rude coast, amid which we were able to distinguish the entrance of our desired port, which appeared like a rent in the rocks dividing the rugged table hills of the

coast into two parts. But while we were dwelling with transport upon the grand natural scenery upon which our eyes rested, and cherishing hopes through the agreeable prospect before us of entering the port that very evening, and while the breeze and the weather were fair, our prudent captain communicated his suspicions as to the fulfilment of our expectations.

It must be remembered what sea we were navigating, and upon what coast we had arrived. And now, although the wind was dead into the port, a doubt had arisen in the captain's mind, upon measuring the distance by the bearings of the capes and headlands upon either side of us, and the rate of the ship's sailing, and marking the hour, whether, in case we should persevere in running down, we could with certainty enter before the close of the day; and, after some hesitation, the accomplishment of our object did not appear to him sufficiently probable to admit of our running upon the land with the wind directly on shore, without great imprudence and risk, until the next day. The east wind, which was blowing, is usually accompanied upon this coast by a misty atmosphere and bad weather; and in case of its thickening in before we reached the mouth of the port, we might hardly expect to find our way into the strait; while with a considerable increase of the wind, it might be impossible to work off the coast. The vessel's head was therefore reluctantly placed in the opposite direction, and, to those who knew the nature of the winds and the weather upon this coast, without much prospect of our being able again to approach the port for some days.

Up to this time, I have set down all the incidents that seemed to offer any variation from the every-day experience of most voyages. After this, we passed no less than sixteen days more in perpetual contest with the winds and the sea, before we were able to accomplish

our entrance into the Bay of Avasha. A very brief notice of the occurrences of that period will suffice.

It was not, indeed, two hours from the time our ship's head was turned from her port, before she was under close-reefed topsails, and such storm staysails as she could bear, with the wind due east, with thick weather. And it was soon clear that had we run down upon the land, our safety would have depended entirely upon the chance of very nicely hitting the entrance of the port; for such was the violence of the wind during the night, that we could not keep even the course of the coast; and when the next day broke, we were not able, by reason of the thickness of the atmosphere and the uncertainty of the currents, to tell how near we were to the iron-bound shores that were under our lee.

From this time we were alternately running upon the land, and hauling off under storm sails, just as the almost incessant gales and the direction of the winds favoured or opposed us. We had even a second time a view of the entrance of our port, and were again driven off. Twice during this period of uncertain and tempestuous weather, we were lying to under the close-reefed main topsail; and at one time we were by the reckoning no less than 340 miles from the port which we had actually twice seen, and once been so near entering. Such is the uncertainty and such the delight of navigating these seas.

The chief occurrence which varied our every-day experience during this long and tedious struggle with the obstinate elements, was an alarm of no ordinary character, which threatened us with even a worse fate than the wreck and total loss of the ship and all on board upon the rocks so often beneath our lee. One morning, after the cabin had been several times half full of water, and the partitions between the departments were broken to pieces, and the furniture was nearly all destroyed, the

captain and myself were sitting upon a sofa, which, from being placed in a niche, had escaped the general wreck, and were very composedly enjoying a favourable change of weather that had occurred, and the fumes of the *chiboock*, when suddenly a seaman in his shirt entered with a woe-begone countenance to inform us, that, upon turning out of his berth, which was upon the half-deck, he had found the floor so hot that he could not stand upon it without his shoes; and he had rushed to the cabin just as he stood, to convey the awful intelligence of his fears, which he communicated in a few brief words.

Upon receiving this intelligence, our captain, before hastening to the half-deck, as one of less presence of mind might have done, summoned the officers who were on duty to the cabin, and then with admirable coolness issued his orders. To one officer was given the charge to see that all the hatches were so battened down and made tight, that not the smallest portion of air could escape from the hold; and to another was given the order to cause to be drawn from the sea, and handed below, as large a quantity of water as possible.

By the time the officers returned to the deck, the alarm had reached the whole ship, and all became now activity, but without the slightest breach of order. A few moments only elapsed before several casks of water had been filled and secured on the lower deck, and a number of men placed around with buckets of water in hand to await the opening of the hatches for the discovery of the true cause of our fears.

The heat was now so intense here, where the greater part of the officers and crew were gathered, that it was scarcely supportable, though the deck beneath our feet was already wet with sea-water. Yet there was no appearance of smoke, which, if there had been flame,

could not but have appeared somewhere. It was therefore the captain's impression that the heat proceeded solely from the cargo, and had not yet broken into flame. Thus it was above all things necessary to avoid admitting such a current of air upon opening the hatches as to cause the bursting out of flame below, which, as there was a quantity of spirits among other things in the hold, would have been instantly attended with the dreaded consequences. All communication between the external air and that between decks was therefore carefully cut off. And it was now a trying moment when the hand was placed to lift the hatch; it would reveal the certainty of our destruction, or fill us with hope, if not assure our safety. The captain and his chief officer stood one on either side of the portion of the hatch to be lifted, while two of the other officers gradually removed the tarpaulin which covered it without any consequences yet appearing. Then the two first-mentioned officers gingerly lifted the portion of the hatch which they held; and the instant the air found a free passage, a damp vapour rushed up, which was so intensely hot as, if possible, to increase the alarm. Prudently, however, the hatches were now still very gradually further opened, and the water withheld. And now after a few minutes the vapour diminished in quantity; and our alarm ceased, and all the injury we suffered after all was a good scorching from the vapour which had proceeded from the lower hold. But it is certainly my impression, that had the hatches been suddenly and fully removed, and those of the upper deck kept open, the rush of air thereby caused would have been followed by the bursting out of flame from the combustible materials in the hold, from which the heat turned out to proceed, that would have been attended with all the consequences which we had dreaded.

As much as possible of the cargo was now hoisted between decks, and wherever else it could be safely disposed of; and upon examination, it was found that a large quantity of rye flour that we had on board, aided no doubt by the spirits which were near it, had heated during the time that the hatches were necessarily closed on account of the long continuance of bad weather; and in an hour or two all went on again as steadily as before.

Among the troubles we experienced during the long suspension of our hopes of gaining the port, was a scarcity of water. The voyage under favourable circumstances ought not to exceed a fortnight. Thus, after three weeks, we were reduced to so small a supply of this necessary of life, that our captain had to put us upon short allowance; and after the thirtieth day, he thought it necessary to reduce this to a most inconvenient quantity, and at the same time to communicate his doubts concerning the prudence of our remaining much longer upon the coast, should the same weather continue. This question was, however, one of great difficulty. If we should abandon our attempts to enter the port of Avasha, where were we to find the shelter and relief of which we were in search? One of the Aleutian Islands was the first place of refuge which would naturally occur to a Russian, where the Russo-American Company have a factory. But to leave a port to which we were so near for another in a similar climate, and from which we were at least three weeks' sail, when we had not water enough for ten days more, without immediately reducing the allowance to the smallest quantity upon which we could subsist, was not a step to be hastily taken. In the meantime, a few days' longer delay would render it impossible that the step could upon any account be had recourse to with any chance of success.

There was, however, still another course possible, and for which there was at least a precedent. Only a year or two ago, the annual ship making the same voyage from Siberia, found herself in the same position with regard to the weather and the season, although she had still a sufficient quantity of water on board; and after striving against the tempests until all hope was abandoned by her commander, she bore up for the Bonin group of islands in the latitude of 27 degrees, and after wintering in one of these made good her voyage in the spring. This was, however, a much longer passage than that to the Aleutian Islands, and offered proportionably less hopes, on account of our want being that of an absolute necessary of our existence. All things thus weighed, therefore, it was determined to persevere to the utmost in our struggles to gain the port of Kamtschatka.

At length, upon the fifteenth day after that upon which we obtained the first sight of the Bay of Avasha, we saw the mountains above mentioned for the third time, now quite covered with snow, at the distance of fifty-three miles, bearing nearly due west of us. The wind was northerly, and the circumstances were deemed so favourable, that we made all sail a third time directly towards the haven of our hopes; and in the evening we were within ten miles of the entrance into the bay, when the wind drew out, but without any such change of weather as to endanger our hopes of maintaining our position during the night.

Before this day closed, we found ourselves in company with another ship, which was evidently a whaler, and which we passed upon the opposite tack; for she was striving like ourselves to gain the entrance of the bay. This was to me a most welcome incident; for considering the time we had been out, and the length of the ship's previous long passage, I had but faint hopes of

any whaler coming into the port during the season, and upon which I knew all my hopes depended of escape from the peninsula before the setting in of the winter.

After tacking several times during the night, we found ourselves in precisely the same position the next morning that we had been in at sun-set the previous evening; and the weather being still fine, we continued to beat up towards the port until mid-day, when it fell calm. At one o'clock, however, a fine breeze came in from the sea, and with all sail set we entered the narrow passage leading to the bay, which we found a mere gut, as it had appeared at a distance, between mountainous table lands on both sides. The whaler, which we had missed in the morning, had beaten in, or been favoured by the wind, and entered the gut before it was well day. But she had been caught by a breeze that came from the bay, and had anchored in the gut; and she now got under weigh again, as she took the breeze that we brought up with us.

At two o'clock, we passed three rocks called the Three Brothers, rising above the surface of the water on the right hand, as high probably as our topmasts; and after these, we passed also a rock on the opposite side of the gut, called the Grandmother.

The winds were light, and they became less favourable as we proceeded. But as soon as we had passed through the gut, the fine Bay of Avasha opened before us. This bay is about ten miles in breadth; and within it at its north-west side, there is a little inner port, where now appeared the Russian seat of the government of Kamtschatka, Petropavlovski (or the town of St. Peter and Paul), off which we anchored early in the night after our passage of thirty-six days, during more than half of which we had been exposed to the most tempestuous weather.

In concluding the account of this protracted voyage,

I will only add, that I left the Irtysch with a strong impression of the superior skill and seaman-like qualities of the Russian officers on board; and with admiration of the perfect discipline that was maintained without recourse to severity. After having been accustomed to voyages in almost every description of vessel, with and without that essential instrument, the chronometer, I am able to say that I was never on board a ship where the results of the reckoning without a chronometer were more precise than on this occasion.

It is impossible to speak, however, in the same terms of the seamanship of the men generally on board. About half a dozen of them, who were accustomed like the officers to the navigation of these seas, were, as far as I was able to judge, equal to any, save the best of our own seamen, with whom I have sailed; but the rest, the greater portion of whom had marched from the Black Sea, and had been three years on their journey, were the worst I ever sailed with. Our chief officer, Chudinoff, who added the qualifications of an artist to those of his profession, before I left Kamtschatka, presented me with a drawing of some of the Kurile Isles, which he had made during our passage.

CHAP. XXX.

KAMTSCHATKA — PETROPAVLOVSKI.

Position of the Peninsula.—Most remarkable natural Features.—Volcanic Mountains.—Rivers.—Animals.—Climate of Kamtschatka.—Government.—Bay of Avasha.—Grand Views.—Landing of the Passengers.—Safe Harbour.—Government-house.—Interview with the Commandant.—Gospojah Machin.—State of Solitude.—Effect on a St. Petersburgh Lady.—Captain Knox.—American Store.—Dinner at the Commandant's.—The two Ships enter the inner Port.—The American Whaler.—Relief of Suspense.—Arrangements.—Anglo-Kamtschadale.—Difference between Russian and Italian *Fêtes*.—Russian *Fête* kept for Exchange of Rings.—Grand Duke Constantine and the Duchess.—Dinner at Government-house.—A Step worthy to be imitated by our Admiralty.

KAMTSCHATKA comprises the whole of that great peninsula which stretches out from the coast of Asia at its north-eastern extremity, and is washed by the Pacific Ocean on the east and the Sea of Ochotsk on the west. It lies between the 51st and 64th degree of north latitude, and between the 155th and 164th of east longitude. It is between 700 and 800 miles in length, and about 250 in breadth at its centre near the latitude of 55 degrees, but not above eighty or ninety at either of its extremities. The most remarkable natural features of this great peninsula are its volcanic mountains, which rise at intervals throughout a vast range, which stretches from its southern to its northern extremity, and appears to be but a continuation of the volcanic range which forms the Kurile Islands, and extends even to Japan and the islands along the eastern coasts of the Asiatic continent. It has only

one navigable river, called the Kamtschatka, which falls into the Sea of Kamtschatka near the centre of the peninsula, but it has many less considerable streams. The coasts and all the rivers of Kamtschatka abound in fish and water-fowl. The sea is frequented by whales of several species, and by walruses and seals in great abundance, besides cod and herring; and in the rivers are found great quantities of salmon. Geese and ducks, also, of several species frequent the coasts and the rivers during the autumn and spring in great numbers.

The peninsula is inhabited by three aboriginal tribes, the Kamtschadales, the Kouriaks, and the Ohlutors. The first of these occupy the southern, and the other two the northern districts of the country. But the whole of the native population is not supposed to exceed 4000 or 5000 souls.

The climate of Kamtschatka is much milder than that of the continent in the same parallel of latitude, owing, without doubt, to the influence of the sea on both sides of it. The maximum of cold in the southern districts does not exceed 20 degrees.

The country politically forms a part of the government of Ochotsk, and is comprehended within the grand province of Eastern Siberia. Its capital town is called Petropavlovski, or the town of St. Peter and St. Paul, and is seated in the Bay of Avasha. The government of the peninsula at the time I visited the country, was administered by Captain Machin of the imperial navy. Its chief provincial towns or villages are Bolschiretsk, Tiguilsk, Nijhni Kamtschatka, and Verchnei Kamtschatka.

When the passengers on board the Irtysch came on deck on the morning after our arrival in port, we found the captain had left the ship at an early hour, to deliver his despatches to the governor or com-

mandant, and report the passengers and freight which he had brought with him, previous to our landing, which left us at leisure to take a particular survey of the harbour of Avasha, and the surrounding scenery.

The view which is here presented to the eye of the spectator far surpasses in magnificence any thing that is to be seen throughout the mountain districts of Siberia. The nearer lands around consist of rude and barren hills; but at a greater or less distance within thirty versts, appear the mountains already mentioned, while not the sign of the existence of men in any state of society, or of the means of their subsistence, is to be seen throughout the vast extent of country under view; save only a little assemblage of a dozen or two of black huts, set, apparently, at the very base of the volcanic mountain of Avasha, from the crater of which was now issuing a column of white vapour.

The highest of these remarkable mountains, and that which is the most conspicuous when they are viewed from the sea, is called by the natives Karatski (the Giant), in Russian Villikanin. It appears from this point, as if it rose immediately from the shores upon the opposite side of the bay, whereas its base is at a distance of thirty versts from the place where we lay. The name of the second is Velutchink, and of the third Avasha.

On our captain's return, he informed me, that he had presented the letter which I brought with me to the commandant, among others, and that he was commissioned to tell me that apartments would be immediately prepared for my reception during my stay, in one of several small buildings set apart for the accommodation of the officers of the station, and that the commandant wished to see me on shore as soon as possible.

The five passengers now descended to the ship's boat, well pleased to leave the storm-beaten Irtysch; for though nothing could be better than the gallant manner in which she had weathered the gales, the anxieties of the passage had been greatly augmented by the uncertainty which we had been under during the last sixteen days, whether we should reach the port, or have to bear up, after all, for some distant country.

We found the inner harbour, as we rowed up it, perhaps the most perfect little haven that is to be met with on the coast of any country in the world. It is formed by a peninsula of elevated land, which stretches out into the noble bay, and makes the harbour by approaching at its extremity within 200 or 300 yards of the opposite land. But again, even within this, there projects from the main land a bank of sand and pebbles, which forms a third harbour within the second, with a narrow passage to enter, but with depth of water to admit vessels of any burden, and capable probably of containing fifty or sixty large ships at anchor at the same time.

We landed at the bottom of this harbour, at a little fort, belonging to which were some storehouses. My fellow-passengers now made their way towards the apartments that had been severally assigned to them, to wait for the ordinary hour to attend on the commandant, while I took my road immediately to the government-house, in order to respond as early as possible to the invitation which had reached me while on board the vessel.

On arriving at the government-house, I found a low but neat wooden building, with a garden in front of it, where the humble birch stood in the place of fruit trees. Upon gaining admittance, I was shown through several doors similar to those which enclose the tenants of the Siberian houses, to the audience apartment of

the commandant, who, after receiving notice of the entrance of a stranger, soon appeared.

My reception from the remote representative of his sovereign was polite and warm, and was accompanied with the offer of his aid in every object I might have in view. After a short conversation concerning the voyage and its several incidents, and upon the news we brought from Siberia and Europe, the commandant conducted me to an inner apartment, and introduced me to his wife, from whom also I met a kind reception. The lady was a native of St. Petersburg, and she was pleased with the opportunity of conversing with one so lately, as something more than a year appeared to her, from her native town. She had married very young, and had now been between four and five years in Kamtschatka. All I was able, however, to communicate to her only amounted to a traveller's passing impression of the modern capital of Russia, and must have been of little value. On the other hand, the lady could not fail to excite great interest in a stranger, from the solitude in which she was residing.

She was still in the very bloom of youth; and with no ordinary degree of beauty, she possessed all the accomplishments common to the more refined portion of her sex in Europe, which served but to heighten the contrast between the daughter of civilisation, and the women of this rude and inhospitable land. Taken so young from the contracted confines within which continental delicacy coops up the younger portion of her sex before the matrimonial alliance, and brought here by sea, the knowledge which she had acquired concerning the world wore more the air of romance than reality. She made no secret of her feelings. She said that for the first two years after her arrival at Kamtschatka, the *ennui* which she suffered had been scarcely supportable; but that since that time, habit

and the occupation which two children gave her, had not only reconciled her to the country, but had even made her now look with something like regret to the time of the commandant's recall to fill some other post.

Before I took leave, I learned from the commandant that an American trading vessel that had visited this port for several seasons, had this year left her master Mr. Knox behind, who had established a little general store for the purpose, more particularly, of trading with the natives in the interior of the country; and after receiving an invitation to return to dinner, I was now conducted by one of the commandant's servants in search of Mr. Knox at his little American store, in hopes of being able to obtain the information which was so important to me, respecting the whaler that entered the port with us, and was now at anchor in the bay.

On my arrival at Mr. Knox's, I found the master of the whaler had already been on shore. The ship proved to be the Josephine, Captain Hedges, of New Bedford; and I found to my great satisfaction, that she was bound to the Sandwich Islands, the very place to which I was most desirous of prosecuting my travels, and that she was to sail as soon as she had refreshed her crew by one or two weeks' repose, and procured wood and water, which were chiefly the objects for which she had entered the port. After this, I was conducted to the quarters provided for me, where I found a servant already in attendance, with instructions to remain during the time of my stay.

On my return to the commandant's at the dinner-hour that had been named, I found Captain Rudakoff already there, and some of the *chinovnik* residents in the place. Upon the entrance of the lady, we sat down to a dinner little differing in viands, and nothing in ceremony, from that of the pure Russian repast which has been before the subject of remark. But as the captain had

duties to perform this evening, and my own little affairs required attention, we retired together at an early hour after this our first dinner on shore.

The next morning the Irtysch, as well as the whaler, the only ships in the port, entered the inner harbour; and I went on board the whaler to make the acquaintance of my doubtless future captain for a longer voyage than that which I had just accomplished. The captain was on board; and it was no small relief to me to find the hardy navigator of these cold and stormy regions, a free, open, and thorough sailor. He was much delighted, also, to find that he had the chance of a companion during perhaps another month or two of fishing, as well as during the voyage, which at once relieved me from the anxiety I had felt from the time of leaving Irkoutsk, on account of my being, for the reasons before mentioned, so ill provided with the means of travelling. Our arrangements, therefore, did not cost a moment's time, nor more breath than would have been required to throw a harpoon into one of the monsters of the deep with whose blubber the good ship was nearly loaded.

The next morning at a very early hour, I went in search of another foreigner of my own nation or race. At the dinner at the government-house the day before this, I had been informed that the lady of the commandant was acquainted with the English language. Upon questioning her, however, she informed me that she had been instructed in English at school, but that she had not made much progress in speaking for lack of opportunity, and that she was now afraid to attempt it. But she informed me, that there was an honest man here, whose native tongue at least was English, who had been left behind by a whaler that had put into this port many years since, and who had married a Kamtschadale girl, and had now a grown-up

family, and that she had endeavoured to make some use of him as an instructor. But she said she found his pronunciation so different from that of the master by whom she had been taught at school, that she supposed he must be an American, as she had heard that the Americans spoke the language differently from the English themselves; and in the meantime, as he was not very apt at distinguishing the parts of speech into which philologists divide language, she had not been able to make much use of him.

In search of this man, therefore, not without some curiosity concerning what he might turn out to be, I was now led by my servant to a little dwelling among the scattered huts of the place. As we approached his door, the good man appeared; and while I was full of expectation of hearing some backwoods-man's elegant discourse, behold, quite as elegant a string of cockneyisms of the style of the quarters of London the least frequented by the schoolmaster, and such as would doubtless as much have startled any home-keeping American of one of the Atlantic cities, as they surprised myself at Kamtschatka. The Anglo-Kamtschadale, however, had been a bricklayer before he became a sailor and a wanderer so far.

The next day was a *fête* day among all the civilised inhabitants of the little town. The Russians of every race, and the Italians, notwithstanding the great contrast in their characters generally, which is scarcely exceeded by that of the climates in which they live, have certainly one point of resemblance, which lies in their nearly equal love of holidays or *fêtes*. There is, nevertheless, a remarkable difference in the days and the occasions for which these dissimilar people severally pass their time of rejoicing. If in Italy you inquire what is the occasion of the *fête* you find celebrating by masses, processions of wooden or stone images, and other

appendages to the pomp of Romish worship, you will most probably hear, that it is the day of some wonderful saint that has stood voluntarily chained to the top of a pillar till he died of starvation or the heat of the sun, or of one who enjoyed the somewhat dirty luxury of being eaten up by vermin, or perhaps, of one that flogged himself often and well until he died, and for whom heaven has

"Open'd wide
Her ever-during gates
On golden hinges moving,"

and appointed him to be an intercessor for all penitents, on high. But if you inquire the cause of a *fête* you may happen to find celebrating at any place from one end of this empire to the other, you are almost sure to hear that it is the natal, or wedding, or name's day of some near relation of the parties rejoicing; or, when the holiday is general, of one of the imperial family. The present *fête* was kept to commemorate the exchange of rings between the Grand Duke Constantine, the second son of the reigning Emperor, and the present Grand Duchess, the news of which we brought with us: and the rejoicings indeed on account of the same event I had already witnessed at Irkoutsk.

The commandant gave a dinner on the occasion, at which I had the honour to be a guest; and I had now the pleasure of meeting the deputy or civil governor of Kamtschatka, Gospodin Stetzenkoff, and my fellow-passengers, the officer of artillery and the *ispravnik*; and also several of the *chinovnik* of Petropavlovski. The officers were for the most part from the Black Sea. It may be easily supposed that the service of these coasts is not popular in the Russian navy. Those, however, who engage in it are compensated in a manner our admiralty might do well to imitate. The service is voluntary, and the officers engage for only three

years as a fixed period. During this time they have double pay, and at its termination they receive promotion. If they remain five years, they are allowed a half-year's pay for the expenses of returning; and if ten years, they may retire on full pay of the rank they have attained, or continue in the service, and receive a pension equal to their full pay when they quitted the coast, in addition to that of the rank they actually hold.

The governor's dinner was of course a little too much under the influence of official restraint to be very gay: but after retiring for an hour or two, and returning in the evening, according to Russian custom, we had cards and music and song from the amiable lady of the house, and finally a cheerful supper and the loyal toasts, and such conversation as the time suggested.

CHAP. XXXI.

KAMTSCHATKA — PETROPAVLOVSKI — *continued.*

Character of the Country.—Capabilities.—Obstacles to Progress. —New Plant for the Production of Cloth.—Encouragement of Native Genius.—Germ of future Commerce.—Schools.—Kamtschadale Tongue.—Aborigines.—Races.—Character.—Compared with other Tribes.—The Tchouktchi, an independent Tribe.—Conjectures concerning them.—Vain Attempts to subdue them.—Little known of them.—Fertile Districts of the Peninsula.—Animals.—Minerals.—Coals.—Hospital.—Monuments at Petropavlovski.—First Snow.—Dog-sledges.—Account of the Kamtschatka Dog.—Resembles the Wolf.—Indigenous Disposition.—Nature.—Use made of the Dog.—Management.—Danger when travelling.—Drive in a Dog-sledge.—The Sledge.—Further Observations concerning the Dog.—Arrival of the Herald.—Captain Kellet's Account of his Voyage.—Opinions concerning Franklin.—The Weather he had experienced.

As I continued to be daily a guest at the government-house, and the character and capabilities of the country, in regard especially to agricultural pursuits, were often discussed, I had the opportunity of obtaining some information on these subjects, as well as of confirming what I heard upon other occasions.

A grand obstacle to the progress of the peninsula in this particular must ever arise from its generally mountainous and sterile character. Very little progress has yet been made in changing the mode of life of the inhabitants generally. The Kamtschadales, however, live in villages like the Russians in winter, when they hunt and procure furs, some of which they exchange with the traders for useful articles, but the most part for *vodka* and tobacco. But in summer many of them

continue still to live more like the independent tribes. At that season they remove to the coasts, where they inhabit fishing stations called *yahkolas*, and live upon any fish they can procure, from the whale cast on shore, to the cod and herring caught by the line and the net.

Yet there are extensive districts that are exceptions in this respect; and the imperial government, advised by several patriotic commandants at this station, has become aware of this, and in conjunction with the Agricultural Society of St. Petersburg, has established two superintendents of agriculture, who travel and distribute seeds sent from Russia, and collect information concerning the condition and capabilities of the country.

On one occasion at the government-house, the commandant, whose interest seemed fully engaged in the advance and prosperity of the country under his government, exhibited a specimen of cloth manufactured by two Kamtschadale girls of the interior of the country, and also some specimens of the plants from which it was made. The cloth was not very fine, but was said to be extremely durable. The plant which furnished the raw material is called *krapeva* by the natives. It very much resembles our stinging nettle, but is of larger growth and of a fibre much stronger. Those which were exhibited were upwards of six feet in length. Specimens of the cloth had already been sent to St. Petersburg; and the agricultural society there had forwarded some rich presents to the two ingenious girls. I could not learn whether the art thus unexpectedly discovered in a land so uncongenial for the growth of any thing springing from original conception, were a relic, as I strongly suspected, of a knowledge of the arts once more widely spread, when the country may have been more populous, or whether it were an extraordinary instance of modern Kamtschadale genius.

At any rate, it may be hoped that it is the incipient germ of a staple of commerce, hereafter to develope the resources of the country, which the states now springing into existence around the Pacific Ocean, and the increase of the trading of the Chinese must eventually produce.

There are two rivers in Kamtschatka in which oysters and mussels are found, and some pearls. The governor on this occasion exhibited several of the pearls, but they were not remarkable for size or form. These rivers are the Goligninor, which proceeds from a small lake near the southern point of the peninsula, and the Outkator, which lies further north.

The government has not been unmindful that moral culture, if it do not precede, must at least march hand in hand with material progress of any kind; and the true elements of proper civilisation, the means of instruction, have been afforded the natives of the southern districts of the peninsula. Two schools have in effect been established; one at Milkova, 320 versts from Petropavlovski, and the other at Clutchifskoi, 600 versts from the capital. And besides these there are no less than eight other small schools for young children, attached to the same number of churches, which have been erected and endowed in different parts of the country.

The Russians of Kamtschatka have not imbibed the inclination and taste of their countrymen at Yakoutsk for the tongue of the natives of the country they inhabit, and these schools are all expressly for the instruction of the Kamtschadale boys only in the Russian language, and, through that means, in other branches of general knowledge.

At Petropavlovski there is only a small marine school, and the boys are chiefly Russians, or of the mixed race. The master of this establishment has a

salary of 115 silver rubles a year, with a retirement on half-pay at the end of six years, or on full pay at the end of twelve years. The following are Kamtschadale words:—

God, *Ducetaschutch*; *Chinovnik*, *Herme*; Sun or Moon, *Khiht* (very guttural); Boy, *Patch*; Man, *Tatach*; River, *Keeiche*.

The extreme poverty of the language may be gathered from its having but one term for the sun and the moon; but still more from the circumstance that it has scarcely any names for fish or birds, which are merely distinguished by the moon in which they are most plentiful. Almost all words end with the sound formed by the syllable *iche*.

Several of the officers stationed here had been in the northern and mid-districts of the peninsula, and they unreservedly communicated to me all the observations they had had the opportunity of making concerning both the natives and the capabilities of the country. Their accounts did not differ in any thing essential from those generally given by ancient travellers in Kamtschatka. They informed me, however, that a second tribe called Ohlutors, numbering about 1000 souls, in addition to the Kouriaks, inhabit the northern districts, which have therefore been placed among the native tribes mentioned in a previous page. Their mode of life and their customs are similar to those of the Kouriaks. Both live without settled habitations, like the Tungouse, and subsist wholly by hunting, and their sole beast of burden is the reindeer. They pay a small *yasae* in furs to the Russian government; but, save in this formality, they may be still considered as independent tribes. I saw none of either of them; but from all I heard, I am disposed to believe that in feature they equally resemble the Tungouse; but they are declared to be

of a much less docile disposition. Captain Rudakoff, who had visited all parts of the shores of the sea of Ochotsk, informed me that the Russians who, with some Kamtschadales, were settled at the little town of Tighilsh, for the purpose of trading with the natives, were occasionally greatly troubled to keep at peace with them; and that during a winter which he himself spent at a little fortress, fifteen versts north of the small settlement called Ijiginsk, at the head of the gulf of the same name, consisting of only 150 men and 250 women, he was obliged to be continually on the guard. Moreover, during the season at which they came to exchange their furs, he could only keep at peace by showing himself always ready for hostilities.

The more southern inhabitants, as well in the features of the face as in the mode of their lives, seem rather to resemble the Yakoutes. The men, as with that tribe, are not much troubled with the appendage to the proper features of the face which grows with such luxuriance upon the chins of the Russians; and I was informed by Russians who had seen some of the Kurilians of the islands, that the men of that tribe are equally deficient in this ornament of the human countenance.

Such differences as appear in the customs and manners of the Yakoutes and the Kamtschadales probably arise from the mere accident of position. The Yakoutes inhabit generally a plain and grazing country, where, notwithstanding the extreme rigour of the climate, they are able to keep cattle; whereas, the Kamtschadales dwell in a mountainous country, and their means of subsistence are chiefly fish and the oily amphibious animals with which their coasts and rivers abound.

In regard to the northern and southern inhabitants of Kamtschatka, the mere circumstance of their using two dissimilar animals for their beasts of burden, has doubtless tended to produce the difference apparent in

their characters—the Kouriaks and Ohlutors employing, as above mentioned, the reindeer; and the Kamtschadales, dogs. Nor could they occupy or roam over the same territory, as the dog of Kamtschatka destroys and devours the deer with the same voracity as the wolf.

Many conjectures have been formed concerning the races to which the native inhabitants of the peninsula belong; but if what has just been said, be considered in connection with many previous remarks concerning the tribes of the continent, it will scarcely fail to convince every one that the Kamtschadales, in common with the Bouriats and Yakoutes, belong to the Mongolian family, and the Kouriaks and the Ohlutors to the same race as the Tungouse; and that the three last-named tribes have a common origin with the aborigines of North America.

There is, however, yet another, if not two more, remarkable tribes inhabiting, and possessing independently the whole of that country which lies north-east of the peninsula, and is bounded on the north, the east, and the south-east by the Arctic Sea, Behring Straits, and the Sea of Kamtschatka. Not much is known concerning them. The inhabitants generally of continental Siberia believe them to be a branch of the family of the Esquimohs; but I heard no reason given for this opinion. It seems most probable that they have a common origin also with the tribes of the north-west coast of America. They have generally been termed by the Russians simply the Tchouktchi. In fact, not much more was known with certainty until lately, than that they are a brave and independent people, who have resisted every attempt to subdue them, or to pass through their territory. Some years since, the Russians sent 200 armed soldiers into their country, rather upon an exploring expedition than with any definite views of conquest. Not a man, however,

returned; nor has any thing transpired that might lead to a solution of the mystery attending their loss. But as the Tchouktchi are known to be warlike, and skilful in the use of the bow, there is little doubt that the Russians were destroyed to a man. Nevertheless, they occasionally visit the Russian posts to trade with the merchants, where they chiefly exchange mammoths' teeth and skins for tobacco and *vodka*, and this has led to the little knowledge that has been acquired concerning them. They appear to consist of two tribes, one of which is subject to the other. The highest tribe the Russians call the *Sidiatchi* Tchouktchi or Settled Tchouktchi, on account of their being stationary, and the other *Olenny*, or Reindeer, or Travelling Tchouktchi. The mode of life of a people confined to a climate so rigorous, with scarcely any commerce with strangers, must doubtless be such as would greatly interest us, could we depend upon what we might hear.

Several of my friends had visited the most fertile part of the peninsula in the mid-districts. They described it as comprising an extensive valley, lying for the most part between two ranges of hills, and watered by the River Kamtschatka. Here the soil is composed of fine mould, similar to that which we have seen prevailing in Siberia; and its natural productions are abundant, consisting of all the varieties of the fir and the birch, of a finer growth than any to be found in the same latitude upon the Asiatic continent. It was the general opinion, that all this part of the country would produce hemp, flax, and the principal culinary vegetables. Ships of 100 tons' burden may advance 200 versts up the river which here fertilises the country. Raspberries, strawberries, whortleberries, currants, and cranberries, abound also in the same district. There is likewise much grass in the lower lands; and many

forest trees flourish on the drier soils, such as larch, poplar, willow, cedar, and juniper.

The wild animals most abounding in the peninsula are, bears, lynxes, sea and river otters, reindeer, foxes of different colours, wolves, and martens or sables. The natives exchange annually about 30,000 of the skins with the Russian traders, for various articles of merchandise. Ducks, geese, and other birds of passage, are plentiful in spring and autumn.

Of the fish with which the rivers abound, salmon of several kinds is the most remarkable. One sort, called *krasnee* (red) by the natives, is commonly taken from three to four feet in length; and another called *garbooscha* (hump-backed) is equally abundant. Herrings are as plentiful in spring and autumn, as upon the coasts of Europe and America. Smelts are likewise plentiful at the same season. There is also another fish called *vachnia*, about the size of a herring, and of excellent quality, as I am able to say and well remember from having received a present of a large basket full from Gospojah Machin at the moment of my departure, and which we found a true luxury on board the whaler.

There is little doubt that the peninsula is rich in mineral deposits, but it has been very imperfectly explored. The natives are said to know of districts which abound in the precious metals, but which they judge it prudent to conceal, lest it should tend to increase the number of the Russians in their country, and by and by lead, as they seem to have a somewhat obscure presentiment, to their being forced to labour in the mines. That districts of the country abound in iron ore there can be no doubt. Captain Vassillief informed me, that perfect iron sand was found in the vicinity of Nijhni Kamtschatka, with which he was well acquainted. Coals are, probably, also abundant.

Captain Rudakoff informed me that they were found in great quantities, and of good quality, in the vicinity of Tighilsk in the Sea of Ochotsk, to which he had made several voyages. Some that I saw at the government-house at Petropavlovski were, however, hard and indifferent.

I was politely conducted over the hospital here by the commandant, in company with the government medical superintendent. It was an establishment upon precisely the same footing as that at Ochotsk. I must here mention, however, that the peculiar complaint prevailing in Siberia, of which the symptoms and effects have been particularly noticed, does not exist upon this peninsula.

Petropavlovski possesses two humble monuments to the memory of two of the earliest navigators who visited this bay, the unfortunate De la Perouse and Behring. I visited them in company with my friend Captain Rudakoff. They were both erected by the Russians. That to the memory of Behring consists of a metal obelisk about eight feet in height. It was sent from St. Petersburgh, and has been placed in the garden attached to the government-house, and is protected by a railing. That to the memory of La Perouse is similar in design to the other, but is of wood and is higher. It stands upon an elevated part of the neck of land which has been mentioned as forming the proper harbour, and facing the bay, and is protected by iron railings. It was erected by the Governor of Kamtschatka soon after the visit of Petit Tours. But, strange to say, there is no memorial of Cook.

Upon the 3rd of October (our 15th), the first snow fell that covered the ground, and upon the 4th, the dog-sledges, called *nartees* by the inhabitants, to the great joy of the Kamtschadales and also of their dogs, which filled the air with their howlings of exultation,

began to enliven the lonely little seat of government of the vast country which the peninsula comprises.

The Kamtschatka dog has already been mentioned in the account of the latter part of the land journey in Siberia, where he first came under my observation; but as this remarkable animal is not there found in the perfection of his nature, it was considered better to postpone all that it might be thought necessary to say concerning his character and qualifications until our arrival in the peninsula, where he entirely supplies the place of the horse elsewhere, and where all his useful qualities are better developed, better known, and more appreciated.

This remarkable and valuable animal must be considered as indigenous in this country, where he is found roving wild upon the hills, and subsisting in precisely the same manner as the wolf. In his nature, both physically and in respect to his temper and disposition, he seems about equally to resemble that tameless animal and the mastiff; yet not precisely in the manner that might be supposed to arise from the cross breed of the two species, but rather as possessing some of the qualities of the one and of the other, neither confounded nor modified, but distinctly marked, and perhaps in equal perfection to the same qualities possessed severally by those animals. He is about the ordinary size of the mastiff, and his colour is usually buff or silver grey, with the several darker or lighter shades of these colours as an invariable basis. The form of his body is like that of the mastiff; but his head more nearly resembles that of the wolf. His ears stand up in the same manner, and are of the same form as those of the wolf. But it is in the eye, and the character of the sense of which this feature is the organ, and in the habits which this engenders, and in his disposition, that the dog of Kamtschatka most distinctly resembles the

wolf. Like his fellow-rover, he sleeps more by day than by night, and he sees better by the little light afforded by the stars or the moon than by the light of the sun; which has given rise to the same vulgar error concerning his vision, which is not unknown among ourselves regarding the cat, that he can see in the dark.

If there be any exception to the distinct manner in which the dog of Kamtschatka possesses the character and qualities of the two animals to which we have compared him, it is in regard to his voice, which is heard in loud cries, and undistinguishable sounds, between the bark and the howl of both those animals.

In respect, more particularly, to his disposition, and what may be termed his moral qualities, he may be pronounced to be very intelligent in all that regards the labour in which he is engaged, very eager to work, and obedient, like the canine species generally, to one master alone, but without being susceptible of that kind of attachment which more or less in all other species of the dog, enables us to sympathise with them, and even sometimes excites in us a degree of friendship which not every one of our own species is able to inspire us with. Thus, every pack or team of dogs must be always driven by the same hand and guided by the same voice, which the whip, and not caresses, has taught them to remember and obey.

The dog with these qualities becomes in this country a very serviceable animal. Whatever, indeed, our horses and bullocks perform for us, if we except carrying us on their backs and ploughing our arable land, the dogs perform for the Kamtschadales. There is, however, little employment for them in summer; at which season they are allowed to range about and get their food, which they generally find in the rivers, in the best manner they can. Some pains are at all times

required to keep them in good temper and at peace with their neighbours, both human and of their own species. All who keep a team have near their houses, when the snow is on the ground, either stakes driven into the earth, or poles set up just in the same manner that they are placed to form the frame of a wigwam, to which the dogs are attached singly or in pairs. But it is necessary that, whenever they are paired, whether, indeed, at the stakes or in harness, that those which are put together should be not only of the same family, but of the same litter, or at least that they should have been paired since they were puppies. The greater part of them it is at no time safe to leave loose. The younger dogs are said to be the most dangerous in this way. They will not only kill domestic fowls at all times (which cannot, therefore, be kept by the Kamtschadales), and dogs of the smaller species that may chance to be brought to the place, but they have been known to destroy children. While they do not work, they are tolerably fed, and have usually an allowance of half a dried salmon, or a portion weighing about two pounds a day; but when they labour they are worse treated and more stinted than the Siberian horses, and are only given half the quantity of food they receive when at rest; yet they will under this treatment perform journeys of three or four weeks' duration with much less repose than the horse would require. Nay, they will even upon a journey of four or five days, work for fourteen or sixteen hours out of the twenty-four without tasting any food whatsoever, and without appearing to suffer any diminution of strength; and the universal opinion is, that the less food they receive on this side starvation when travelling, the better.

There were probably about eight or ten of these packs or trains of dogs at Petropavlovski at this time, numbering from seven to fifteen dogs in each, for the

number in a train is always uneven. The reason of this arrangement is, that the most intelligent dog of the pack is selected as a leader, and runs alone, and is guided solely by the voice of the driver, or *kyourschik*, as he is termed by the natives, without any use of reins, and the rest follow him. But on some occasions they become wholly unmanageable, which renders it dangerous to travel with them. This, however, is chiefly in the country in which the deer abounds, where they are not often used. Such is their love for the flesh of the deer, that they are said to smell that animal even at the distance of two versts; and whenever they get this incentive to the chase, they start off, and perhaps leave their driver, and whomsoever he may be conducting, to perish in the snow.

Upon this first day of sledging this season, the commandant politely sent me his *nartee* and his *kyourschik* with a train of fifteen dogs, to make a little excursion by way of trying this method of travelling. The *nartee* is a long, light, little sledge, appearing at first sight as much too long as the Siberian ordinary *sani* is too short; and its seat is not higher than fifteen or eighteen inches from the ground, and it very rarely carries more than one person besides the driver. It is by no means a comfortable vehicle, on account of its affording no shelter, and no means of reclining; for which, indeed, it could not be adapted without more inconvenience than advantage, on account of the constant upsets to which the traveller is exposed, owing to there being no beaten tracks or roads, and but a very little level ground in the country.

Having seated myself upon this frail little carriage, which had only a light frame back, and which luxury is not, indeed, a necessary part of the national sledge, the *kyourschik* placed himself in front, just as a lady sits her horse, with a stout stick in his

hands, about five feet in length, which was not, as a stranger might suppose, for beating or terrifying the dogs, but to keep the sledge from upsetting. This part of the duty of the driver, indeed, is in general a most laborious occupation, as much owing to the perpetual obstructions which the sledge encounters, and the unevenness of the ground, as to its liability to upset, on account of its own great length in proportion to its breadth.

Among the better qualities of the Kamtschatka dog, has been mentioned his willingness and even eagerness to labour. But this partly, perhaps, arises from his being, at least at this season, too full of rest, and from the less restraint which he finds from his harness when at work, than from his chain when at the stake. The sight of one of these sledges in motion is, indeed, a sight so agreeable to the eyes of those at the stake, and the dogs in it are subjects of such envy, that wherever it appears it is the signal for a howl of exultation and hope, which spreads from pack to pack among all the dogs in the place, until the whole amphitheatre within which the town is seated, resounds with the canine halloo. Thus, from this hour until I left Petropavlovski, the voice and peculiar howl of the Kamtschadale dog rang perpetually in our ears.

Our little tour upon this occasion was by the lake already mentioned at the back of the town, and which I had before visited on foot; and, deducting the upsets, which were owing to the too great freshness of the dogs than to want of skill in the driver, or to either of the inconveniences above mentioned, the promenade was as agreeable as it was novel.

At day-break, the day after the first fall of snow, we were all surprised by the sight of another ship in the bay, which was presently known to be Her Majesty's discovery ship the Herald, Captain Kellet, which had

been in search of Sir John Franklin and his companions, and had been before in this port at an earlier period of the season. I lost no time in going off to her, and I found Captain Kellet on board. The enterprising and gallant officer was surprised to meet a fellow-countryman at Kamtschatka, and politely communicated to me all he had experienced that was in any way remarkable during his long search beyond the Straits of Behring, and his conjectures concerning the ships and their crews, which we still look for in vain.

Every one is too well acquainted with all that has been done and surmised concerning our regretted countrymen, to render it necessary to make more than a short reference here to the information I received from the captain. He informed me that he had pursued his search until obstructed by the ice; after which, he had deposited provisions upon different parts of the desert coast of the American continent, and set up signal posts at conspicuous points, to attract and direct the adventurers to the spots where they might get relief, in case they should happily reach the open sea. And he had now entered this harbour a second time, in the faint hope that the lost ships might have attained this place of refuge, as well as to leave the remainder of the supplies with which he was charged, in case they might hereafter make their appearance. Captain Kellet was at this time, however, of opinion that they had returned eastward; and he did not despair of hearing something of them upon his arrival upon the western coast of America, to which he was bound.

The weather he had experienced during the whole of the summer in the seas he had been navigating, had been such as he had not expected, and the accounts he gave of it much surprised myself as well as my companions of the voyage from continental Siberia. Upon

leaving San Blas, on the western coast of Mexico, early in the past spring, he had prepared his ship for the storms which he expected to encounter in the higher latitudes; but from that time up to the hour of his arrival at this port, he had had no stronger winds than stiff breezes, to which he could carry his double-reefed topsails, with the top-gallant sails over them; while we had experienced a series of gales in much lower latitudes, which endured for nearly half the thirty-five days that we were at sea.

Before I left the Herald, Captain Kellet, finding my intended movements might prevent me again seeing him, politely gave me at once a frank invitation to accompany him on his return to the coast of America, but which I was induced to decline, partly on account of his early departure, which would have deprived me of my intended excursion into the interior of the country, and partly that I wished to visit the group of islands to which the whaler was bound.

CHAP. XXXII.

KAMTSCHATKA — PARATUNKA.

Passage of the Bay of Avasha.—Landing.—Ancient Forest.—Narrow Lakes.—A Russian Family.—Admiral Ricord's Means of civilising the Natives.—Intermarriages.—Stay the Night.—Renewal of our Journey.—River Paratunka.—A civilised Kamtschadale.—Drive in a Dog-sledge.—Arrival at the Mineral Pools.—Account of our Host.—Other Plans of Admiral Ricord.—Account of our Hostess.—Kamtschadale Girl transformed into an English Lady.—The Mineral Pools.—Their Temperature.—Dimensions of the Pools.—Character of the Water.—Supposition concerning its Components.—Baths applied to all Diseases.—Method of taking them.—Captain Vassillief's Method.—Curiosity in Agriculture.—Volcanic Character of the Vicinity.—Earthquakes.—Departure from the Pools alone.

THE part of the country which had been recommended to me for the excursion which I contemplated, was the district of Paratunka, through which a river of the same name flows, and empties itself into the Bay of Avasha. The route necessary to be taken was not obstructed by such natural obstacles as are at this season, in many parts of the peninsula, insurmountable, and it was through a country the most interesting to a stranger in the land, as well as a native, as the future hope of the Kamtschadales of this vicinity, on account of its being the best watered of all the southern districts of their country. There were to be seen also in this direction some mineral springs and pools, which in themselves were described as curious and worth visiting for a few days.

On the morning after my visit to the Herald, Captain

Vassillief, who had volunteered to accompany me on the short expedition, sent word to inform me, that the shallop in which we were to commence our journey by crossing the Bay of Avasha, was prepared; and at an early hour we set sail for the opposite side of the bay.

The wind was light and unfavourable, when we issued from the snug little inner port of Petropavlovski, and our craft was with difficulty worked into the centre of the broad waters, where we were becalmed for several hours: but we had before our eyes the magnificent scenery above noticed, and we scarcely regretted our detention. Early in the afternoon a light breeze carried us to the entrance of a sheltered inlet, though it failed us when we wanted about two versts of the shore, which obliged us to anchor.

We now landed, in a small canoe which the shallop carried upon her deck, on a lonely beach, with three Kamtschadales whom we had brought for our guides, and a part of our effects, consisting chiefly of provisions. From this, we directed our steps on foot, towards a chain of small and narrow lakes, where some natives living in the vicinity had had especial notice sent them by the commandant some days since to meet us that afternoon with a canoe.

Our path lay here through a forest of birches and limes, which though stunted in height, consisted of trunks and branches of large dimensions; but it was chiefly remarkable, on account of the great age which the trees exhibited. It particularly attracted my attention; for though familiar with the virgin forest from an early age, the wood of similar character, on a narrow track in eastern Siberia, was the only instance of the kind I had before seen. Wherever else I have had opportunities of making any observations, the trees have appeared as if they no sooner attained their full growth, than they rapidly gave place

to others that were rising around them. Here, however, nothing was rising, but all seemed aged, yet with but little appearance of decay; and the captain informed me that this was the character of the greater part of the forests in the peninsula.

Though the distance to the lakes did not exceed two versts, the way was so much interrupted by brambles and underwood, that we were as many hours in passing it. Thus it was full night before we reached the bounds of the wood; and it would have been impossible for us to proceed, had not the snow which was upon the ground aided the little light which a few dim stars afforded. When we issued from among the trees, we found very little increase of light to direct our steps. We now, however, hailed with shrill Indian voices, to ascertain whether the canoe which we expected, was waiting; and we were soon answered by a diligent Kamtschadale, who had been in attendance during the whole day.

The little craft in which we here embarked, was made of a single log of timber, and was very narrow, and not very long, and somewhat inconvenient for our party. As we pushed from the shore, there was scarcely light enough to distinguish the tops of the trees which bordered the narrow lake. After passing through several guts and similar lakes, which occupied us three hours, we landed and crossed a piece of cleared land laid out in pasture, which brought us to a rough log house, where we found quarters for the rest of the night.

The good people here were one of several families of the Russian peasant class, which had been brought to the country by Admiral Ricord, when Governor of Kamtschatka, for the purpose of making a beginning in the good work of mingling the Russian and Kamtschadale blood, as an essential step towards civilising the native population of the peninsula. Marriages, indeed, had even frequently, previous to this time, taken place

between the two races. They had been, however, chiefly confined to Russian sailors, and occasionally their officers at Petropavlovski, and now and then a pope, taking young Kamtschadale girls for their wives, which had done nothing towards introducing industrious habits and spreading the arts of civilised life among the native population.

Our hosts for this night gave us a room apart from that occupied by themselves; and we lay down upon the accustomed forest substitute for beds, good fresh spruce boughs — often much more welcome to the traveller upon his journey than swan's down at home — and passed a very comfortable night.

The next day we rose with the first dawn, took tea, and cakes which the good woman of the house had made from some flour we brought with us; after which, we renewed our journey.

A short walk now brought us to the River Paratunka, where we found a more civilised Kamtschadale than I had yet seen, also waiting for us, like the last, in consequence of a notice he had received from the commandant, with a canoe to aid our passage of the stream, and with a *nartee* and train of dogs to transport us to his abode at the mineral pools.

We found the Paratunka here a rapid stream of about seventy or eighty yards in width, and bordered on both sides by an aged forest resembling that through which we had passed upon the preceding evening.

As soon as we had crossed the river, the dogs, eleven in number, which had been tied to separate trees, were attached in pairs to the sledge; and leaving our spare baggage to the Kamtschadales that had hitherto kept with us, to transport on their backs, we set off, under the conduct of our new guide, at full speed upon a path which he had kept open over an even plain, with nothing to obstruct our way, and with the remains of

coarse grass lying mingled with the snow, and forming quite a wall of two or three feet in height on both sides.

As the distance to the Kamtschadale's abode did not exceed four versts, it was very soon accomplished. Upon our arrival, the hostess met us at the door with a smiling face, that had been handsome, though the cheek-bones might have appeared too high or prominent to those who had not become accustomed to the features of the Eastern races, from some one of which the Kamtschadales unquestionably spring. Her figure was also such as in any part of Europe would be esteemed lady-like; and she was dressed in a printed cotton gown, of European manufacture of course, and not made unlike those worn a few years since by our ladies in the early part of the day.

It was our intention to consider this our head quarters, from which we might make some short excursions during our stay in this vicinity. As the house consisted of two apartments, one of these was appointed for our sole use; and as soon as we were established and alone, the captain gratified my curiosity by an account of our host and hostess, which I must here report.

As the Kamtschadales are indebted to Admiral Ricord for the introduction of the Russian peasants for the purpose of mingling the races, so also are they indebted to the same benefactor for the means of making a first step towards whatever degree of civilisation they may hereafter prove capable of attaining. That enlightened and patriotic commander while in command here sent three Kamtschadale boys to Moscow to receive a liberal education, with the intention of placing the instruction of the youths of the country in their hands on their return. Gospodin Lazarief, our present host, was one of these. Unfortunately, however, in his case the admiral's be-

nevolent intentions were not successful; for with the learning and the good manners which he imbibed in Europe, he unhappily contracted the crying vice of the Russians, the love of the *vodka*, which is seen in its worst features wherever there is a moderate degree of education, as has often been shown in the examples which we have met with in other parts of the country. But he was now so completely lost to all self-government, as to have been in mercy banished from Petropavlovski by the present commandant, and placed in charge of these mineral pools.

Our hostess, who was of the mixed race, had a sister in Europe, whose history is curious and interesting. To those who have not read Captain Cochrane's journal of his travels, it may not be known, that that gallant officer espoused a Kamtschadale young lady. the daughter of a pope of the country. The bride was extremely young; and the captain, on his return to England, whither she accompanied him, placed her at school, and then set off upon fresh travels. After three years he returned again to England, and found that his wife had become quite an English lady, possessed of all the ordinary accomplishments common in good society. Captain Cochrane, however, died soon after this, leaving his young widow all his property; and she afterwards married Captain, now Admiral, Anjou of the imperial navy, who is, I believe, at this time port admiral at Cronstadt. And here it is agreeable to record that, to the honour of this lady, not a post, as her sister informed us, arrives (which is sometimes once and sometimes twice a year), without letters from her to some of her relations in this remote and inhospitable region of the globe.

The springs of mineral waters are situated upon the western side of the narrow plain which we had passed, and at the very foot of the range of hills which form the

first step of the volcanic mountains which lie in this direction; and the house where we were lodged stands upon the first rise of the lowest hill, about seventy or eighty yards from one of the several pools which are here formed by the mineral water.

We paid these curiosities an early visit after our arrival. They form a little chain of miniature lakes. The largest is nearly round, and about twenty-five yards in breadth. Its depth in the centre is from four to five feet, depending upon the weather; but it gradually diminishes on all sides towards its banks. The temperature of the water at the surface while we were here varied from 28 to 32 degrees of heat; and the good people whom we were with, informed us, that 30 degrees was its average temperature at this season; but that, during the summer months, it sometimes reached to 34; and that, during the severest weather in winter, it fell occasionally as low as 25 degrees at the surface.

That the cold in winter has not more effect upon the temperature of the water, must be attributed to the constant supply of the fluid at a very high degree of heat, which is oozing continually from numerous springs at the bottom of the pools, and to the free flow of the superabundance of the water, which is carried off by a narrow stream to the river which we crossed upon the opposite side of the valley.

We lost no time after our arrival, in making a trial of these natural baths; and as there was no accommodation for undressing at the water's edge, nor other shelter than two little screens formed of dried grass to protect the bather against the stroke of the wind on either side at the instant of his stepping out of the pool, we cast off our clothes before leaving the house, and put on our *coloches*, and wrapped our furs, which we brought for the occasion, around us, and after de-

scending to the principal pool, and hanging our furs upon the stakes which supported the screens, marched in.

We found the water very buoyant, and the bottom of the pool covered with a light, loose, dark-coloured substance about six inches in depth, which rose and thickened the water to the surface where it was disturbed, but settled again in a few seconds. The smell of this deposit when taken in the hand was similar to that of the substance left within a gun after its discharge.

As the waters of these pools have not yet been analysed, it is impossible to speak with certainty of their component parts; but, coupling the character of the deposit which is found in them with their sensible and immediate effects upon those who use them, which is a headache, with some people very slight and with others more decided, after the first two or three baths, it may perhaps be concluded, that they possess a large proportion of sulphate of iron and a portion of carbonic acid gas.

The other three pools did not seem to differ from that in which we bathed, either in the temperature or quality of the water, or in any thing save their dimensions, which, as before observed, were smaller.

The season at which these baths should be taken, seems to be a point not yet so much as discussed at Petropavlovski. Nor could I learn that they had the reputation of especial virtue in the cure of any particular class of diseases. Our civilised Kamtschadale, indeed, informed us, that the inhabitants of the country from time immemorial had used them whenever they were ill; but he knew nothing of their application for any particular complaint or class of complaints. He believed, however, that they cured every body who used them of every illness whatsoever with which they were afflicted. He had never heard of

any one having taken the waters internally. I drank about a pint from the freshest spring one morning before breakfast, and about double that quantity the next morning; but I was not able to perceive any effects from these doses, and I did not think it prudent to take a larger quantity without being more certain concerning the mineral substances which the water contained.

Our manner of taking our baths, and the state of the weather at the time, will give some idea of the little regard paid to the method of their application. On the day that we arrived, the weather was fine, and we walked into the pools, as above mentioned, in the middle of the day. But upon the next day, when I awoke in the morning, I observed that it was snowing in large flakes; but finding upon inquiry, after rising, that the captain was already taking his bath, I put on my *schouba*, and descended also to the pool for the same purpose. And here the scene was certainly droll. The snow was now falling so thick, that the opposite side of the pool was not visible. But to prevent the snow from settling upon the head it is the custom to wear a cap, usually of red baize, when in the bath; and the captain was now standing in the very centre of the pool, with his head, which was alone visible, not a little magnified by the vapoury medium through which it was seen, with an inch or two of snow upon the top of his red cap. And this droll prospect was soon doubled, though there was no third party to laugh at our love of mineral bathing. We were sufficiently amused, however, in laughing at one another as we walked about the pool capped with red baize and snow and not always moving very steadily, as the feet are subject to be so scalded by the oozing of the hot water from the earth at the bottom, that the bather must either stand still, by which he will be too soon weary, or dance the polka step while immersed to his neck in the water.

The number of the baths that the captain took daily was quite an illustration of some remarks that have been before made upon the haste, and consequently imperfect manner, with which the Russians are wont to do almost every thing they undertake. The gallant officer began by taking four baths on the day after we arrived; and the second day he increased the number to six, which he continued to take every day during our stay. And so catching is every thing that is wrong, that when the captain took six baths, I could not avoid taking at least three.

Besides the natural curiosity of the mineral pools, we had the opportunity of seeing here a novelty in agricultural affairs. Among the benefits conferred upon Kamtschatka by Admiral Ricord, was the importation of potatoes for seed into the country. Such, however, has been the neglect of their cultivation, together with the rigour of the climate, that, as far as I was able to learn, they are now only to be found in very small quantities among some of the native inhabitants in the watered valleys of the River Kamtschatka, and upon this spot, where they are preserved in a novel manner. They were put in the ground many years since; but this first step towards accomplishing the objects which the admiral had in view, was, here at least, the last; for, whether owing to the ignorance of the planters or not, they were not dug up in the autumn of the same year, and being found the next year both abundant and good, they were left in the ground, where they have remained ever since, decaying and propagating continually, without being in any way affected by the seasons, and yielding always more than this family require. But in order to account for this fortunate circumstance, it must be mentioned, that although the snow covers the surface of the ground, which is frozen in winter, yet so great is the internal heat in this vol-

canic vicinity, that the earth is quite dry and never frozen below a few inches from the surface. Neither damp nor frost, therefore, can reach or destroy them. We had some taken up and cooked for us on our arrival, and every day afterwards during our stay. They were of a bluish colour, and in appearance and flavour, I found them resemble the sort we call kidney potatoes; but they were in form round.

We made but two or three short excursions in our *narâee* along the base of the lower hills of the mountain range during our stay here. The chief interest of our drives was, the fine views we obtained of the near and distant mountains, which in every direction save that towards the sea, presented their snow-capped volcanic cones, sometimes in the evening amidst clouds and vapours, which the setting sun so magnificently gilded that they seemed as if they were again emitting their destructive fires, and sometimes contrasting the chaste white of their summits with the deep azure of the autumnal sky.

There is perhaps no country in the world that is of more purely volcanic formation than Kamtschatka. The whole peninsula must be considered to be composed of but one vast range of volcanic mountains, and the *débris* which remains of the substances emitted during their eruption at different periods in the geological history of our planet. Many of them are still in a state of action; and earthquakes are perhaps more frequent here than in any other country. The number of shocks felt at Petropavlovski averages eight annually. The shock mentioned in the account of our voyage across the Ochotsk Sea, was also felt here, and was one of the severest remembered by the inhabitants. All those who gave me an account of this earthquake, agreed in their descriptions of it; and the commandant informed me that it endured for no less than eight

minutes. During the whole of this time, rumbling and loud noises were heard beneath the ground, and the earth trembled with frightful violence and quick motion. Some of those who experienced it, said they thought at one moment that the earth was sinking beneath them, and the sea about to rush in upon the land, and the next, that they were rising upon the crust of the crater of a volcano in terrible eruption beneath the ground.

From the crater of the Avasha, which is immediately behind Petropavlovski, have been thrown at the same time stones, lava, and water; and from the two mightiest in a state of action, Klutchewsky and Assachninsk, the ashes have been thrown beyond a hundred versts.

After a bath at day-break on the morning of the fifth day, I left my companion to take his six baths a day, which according to his calculation would infuse into his frame as much mineral in one week as the Carlsbad and Kissingen bathers imbibe in six, when they have the patience to persevere for that time. Whether the captain's calculations were just or not, I could not judge; but I was able, at least, to inform him for his encouragement, that I knew a gallant British officer at the latter of the above-mentioned places, who took sixteen tumblers full of the *rakotzy* water daily, for several weeks, without doing himself, as far as he could perceive, the least injury; and, moreover, that I saw the same officer alive three months afterwards.

CHAP. XXXIII.

VOYAGE ON THE RIVER PARATUNKA.—CONCLUSION.

Departure from the Springs.—Embarkation on the River Paratunka.—Aged Forests.—A Kamtschadale Farm.—Difficulties of the Descent of the River.—Enter the Bay of Avasha.—Sport.—Village of Avasha.—Character of the People.—Passage of the Bay.—Arrival at Petropavlovski.—Meeting of Friends.—Accounts of Gaieties during my Absence.—Continuation of Gaieties.—Unsettled Weather.—Symptoms of the Setting in of the Winter.—Embarkation.—Departure.

On the morning of my departure from the mineral springs, our civilised Kamtschadale drove me with his dogs as far as the River Paratunka, where we met two of the men whom we had brought with us from Petropavlovski, and who had been sent off at an early hour to prepare the canoe, as it was my intention to descend the river, in order to make a survey of a part of the country we had not seen.

On arriving at the bank of the river, I took leave of my obliging conductor, and embarked with the two half-wild fellows in their deer-skins and moccasins.

The weather was now fine, and there were yet no signs of ice; and, as the current was strong, we launched out into the middle of the river, whence we swept rapidly down the stream. The banks on both sides of us presented forests of aged birches, thinly sown, and similar to those that we had observed between the Bay of Avasha and the river. We passed jollily on for about an hour without encountering any obstruction. Here we came to the mouth of the tributary river, which falls into the Paratunka upon the left hand. On the point of land at the confluence of the two rivers, there was a piece of cultivated ground with a hut upon it; and I landed with the two Kamtschadales to take a hasty survey of

the place. A wild-looking fellow, with a mop by head and clothed in deer-skins, was standing at the door of the hut, and we accepted an invitation he gave us to walk in. Within, we found an old man and woman half clad, sitting on the ground in the midst of dirt and undistinguishable rubbish, and a girl, with hair in quantity, colour, and disorder, very much like that of the brown or grizzly bear. We remained within but a moment, however; after which we examined the farm.

The spot upon which this Kamtschadale had fixed his abode, was a wild patch of land, upon which nothing appeared to grow save a few cabbages, of which some of the stalks only were seen peeping above the snow, mingled with all kinds of the ground herbage of the country. As to implements of agriculture, there was absolutely nothing but a rude hoe. Nor was there any appearance of shelter for beasts of any kind.

When we renewed our voyage, we found the river, after the union of the two streams, much broader than before, but shallower and full of rapids; and it required all the efforts of the two strong fellows who paddled the canoe, to keep her from driving upon shoals, or bringing up and being probably upset, by great trees, which, after being thrown into the river by the violence of the wind, or by the falling of portions of the banks upon which they had flourished, rested upon the shoals and sand banks with which the river abounded, or of touching the ground and capsizing in passing down the rapids.

We had intervals, however, of a clear way and some sport. The ducks were plentiful, and appeared to be too little disturbed to have much dread of the most subtle of their enemies, and the most skilful in the arts of destruction. And while the paddlers continued to perform their duty, I was able to kill duck after duck, until we had several brace, without the sport delaying us a moment longer than was necessary to pick up the birds.

Twice our canoe took in water enough to wet us well during the passage of the rapids; but about mid-day we swept into the open Bay of Avasha, at its upper extremity, where we met a strong wind that had raised a sea which offered some obstruction to our progress. By keeping near the shore, however, at a late hour in the evening we gained the village of Avasha, at the foot of the mountain of the same name. We found here about a dozen houses of the same description as those of Petropavlovski; but the inhabitants, less accustomed to strangers, stood at first contemplating us, about half way between the houses and the beach, with apparently just that kind of mixed terror and respect which an *ispravnik* come to administer justice might inspire. On discovering, however, that their visitor, whatever might be his humour or objects, must be very harmless, on account of his want of the tongue of the land, they invited us to enter the best house, where I received such civilities as to leave no doubt that the two Kamtschadales that were with me had at least represented their charge to be some person of importance that had arrived at Petropavlovski.

Here we were obliged to exchange our canoe for one better adapted for rough weather; and in this we re-embarked. We had now a desperate struggle against the winds and the sea, with a rugged and steep coast under our lee, for nearly the whole of the night; during which, my own early practice in the use of the paddle admitted of my being an aid which the Kamtschadales had not dreamed of; though I perhaps did not gain in their good opinion and respect, by making efforts hardly thought by people in this state of society consistent with the dignity which they like to see those whom they serve maintain. However, we rounded the point of the inner harbour, and landed at Petropavlovski about an hour before the break of day, without experiencing any other inconvenience than a thorough wetting.

On arriving at my domicile, we found the young man that had been put at my service by the politeness of the commandant on my arrival here, already on the watch, and I learned that the Herald was to sail at day-break that very day. I therefore sent off a cask of water which I had brought with me without waiting for the day; and I had the satisfaction of receiving a note from Captain Kellet, informing me of its arrival on board after he was under weigh. Besides this cask I brought a small quantity of water from the springs to transport to Europe, but of which I am not able to report the safe arrival.

Soon after it was well day, I received a visit from my good friends Captain Rudakoff and Captain Stetzenkoff, from whom I heard an amusing account of what had passed while I had been up the country. The remote little provincial seat of government had been started from its accustomed dulness into a perfect ecstacy of delight, by the contributions of the younger officers of the Herald to the spare amusements of the inhabitants.

During the long and wearisome navigation of the Arctic Sea, our intrepid countrymen had amused themselves at intervals by dramatic performances; and in order now to return some of the attentions paid them here upon their former visit, they had given a representation of Molière's laughable comedy of *Le Médecin malgré lui*, succeeded by a ball, both of which entertainments had been honoured by the attendance of the commandant and his wife.

It was a full fortnight before the effects of this break in the dull lives of the inhabitants of Petropavlovski had in any measure subsided, and it will be many years before the officers of the Herald will be forgotten. It seemed, indeed, as if the little capital, once moved to gaiety and mirth, was unwilling to sink down to its ordinary dull level; and although there was no family

fête or name's day to accommodate itself to the time, a pretext to prolong the agreeable excitement was easily found. The governor had lately caused a house to be erected for new quarters for two of the officers. This had been taken possession of by the deputy-governor Stetzenkoff and Captain Vassillief, who had now returned to Petropavlovski none the worse for his baths; and it must be warmed for winter by a dance and the sounds of mirth. Mr. Knox, who had been some time known to the inhabitants as commander of the trading American ship above mentioned, was now just established for the winter as a merchant among them; and his house, too, required a consecration of a similar kind. Thus we had two more balls during my stay at Petropavlovski, at which I may say the display of good manners among the native guests was not less than the generous hospitality of the hosts.

The choice of a moment to leave a port in this high latitude is a matter of some difficulty; and the state of the weather for several previous days may not be with impunity neglected. The master of the whaler had fixed the first favourable occasion in November to brave the two restless elements, in the hope of getting a favourable offing from the firm, and too often to seamen, more dangerous third. The weather, however, was yet very unsettled. The ground had been already for several weeks covered with snow; but yet so scantily as to assure the inhabitants, that the easterly wind which had brought it, was but the precursor of the storm, which upon the eastern coast of Asia, as well as of America, usually precedes the full establishment of winter. The lake in the rear of Petropavlovski had been long frozen, while the harbour was still clear of ice. During the first two weeks in November, there were frequent but indecisive changes, and light winds from all points of the compass. The barometer at the government-house, as well as that on board the whaler,

the accuracy of which I had afterwards the opportunity of attesting, continually fell with all winds, and left no doubt upon the minds of the most experienced observers, that the precursory tempest was at hand. The danger, however, of being frozen in and detained during the winter, began, as November advanced, to counterbalance the peril of tempting the unsettled elements in these little-frequented seas at this season; and a westerly wind and clear weather upon the 14th of the month induced our captain to determine upon leaving the port on the following day. Upon this evening, therefore, I took leave of the commandant and his amiable wife, and of the majority of my Russian and Kamtschadale friends, and awaited now but the morning and the signal for departure.

Early on the morning of the 15th of November (our 27th), which was twelve days later than any vessel had at any time previously left the port, I was conveyed by Captains Rudakoff and Vassillief in the commandant's shallop, on board the whaler, now lying at anchor in the open Bay of Avasha. We found the topsail to mast and the anchor a-peak as we reached the ship. The moment for quitting the port and the empire was now come. But before my companions returned to the shore, we plighted our faith in one another's friendship, which, I doubt not, will, on their part as well as my own, be long maintained.

The topsail of the whaler was now filled; and as the shallop conveyed the Russian captains on shore, the favourable gale carried the ship towards the open sea; and, before the sun went down, we were fairly on our voyage.

THE END.

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